DESIRE, THE FRACTAL STORY

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/13653873.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warnings:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death, No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	F/M, M/M, Multi
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Bedelia Du Maurier/Hannibal Lecter, Dr. Frederick Chilton/Bedelia Du Maurier
Characters:	Bryan Fuller, Jack Crawford, Beverly Katz, Bedelia Du Maurier, Dr. Frederick Chilton, Jimmy Price, Brian Zeller, Randall Tier, Will Graham's Dogs, Freddie Lounds, Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Never-ending story, Will Graham & Beverly Katz Friendship, Hannibal Lecter in Love, Jealousy, Murder, Attempted Murder, Infidelity, Hannigram - Freeform
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of DESIRE, THE NEVER-ENDING STORY
Stats:	Published: 2018-06-25 Completed: 2018-12-14 Words: 68,655 Chapters: 29/29

DESIRE, THE FRACTAL STORY

by DuchessofYork, Elefant

Summary

Hannibal is a renowned ER surgeon, and he is also unhappily married with Bedelia du Maurier. Nothing prepared Hannibal to face Michelangelo's David, living and breathing, here in the Renaissance Harborplace hotel ballroom. He was stunningly beautiful! Hannibal's movements, as he turned, attracted the attention of the speaker who looked unconsciously in his direction, azure blue gaze met amber one, as if hell and heaven broke free. For a few seconds, they both stopped breathing and were unable to regain control of their actions. Then Hannibal automatically gave a blissful smile and the speaker cleared his throat again before pointing the laser at the slide on the screen behind him. Nothing else indicated that their lives were irremediably entwined from now on…

Notes

We thank @ FireMage for her proofreading. Don't be too harsh with us, none of us is an native English speaker. We wrote it to keep the Fannibals spirit alive. We enjoy our family and this is our gift to you all, Fannibals. Enjoy life and carry on Hannibal!

Big Bang...Without Theory

Hannibal blinks awake, then sighs with content. He smiles when he feels weight on his chest. Lifting a hand he strokes the curls of his sleeping lover. How does he ever get this lucky? Here he is, in the comfortable bed of his hotel room with a young attractive man lying with him. It isn't the first time Hannibal wakes up with Will Graham (he hopes it isn't the last either). When they first fell into bed, Hannibal wanted to blame it on the wine. But really, who is he kidding. Two bottles of wine between them could hardly result in a drunken fumble.

Then it happened again, and again, and again, and Hannibal stopped counting. All thoughts towards this illicit relationship faded with time. Yes, Hannibal is married, been married for the last five years to his childhood friend; Bedelia du Maurier, who has a private practice in Baltimore about ten minutes away from their shared home. Hannibal himself is an ER surgeon at John Hopkins. It was the wish of both their families that they should settle down, since they both had stable careers now. Five years of marriage and Hannibal feels numb. In fact, even when they first kissed and made love Hannibal felt no spark.

But with Will, it was different. The first time he saw Will, it seemed like time stood still for a moment. Hannibal had it forever engraved in his mind palace. As a renowned surgeon he was often invited to give speeches at various symposiums across the country. He often politely refused, but this one, on new surviving emergency techniques for shooting victims, taking place in Baltimore, had him interested. So Hannibal let himself be persuaded to participate. On the morning of the event he was seated at the first row in the Renaissance Harborplace hotel ballroom, speaking with two colleagues behind him about the survival statistics presented by the precedent speaker. Hannibal argued that those numbers were far too optimistic, as they only take into account the wounded taken to hospital by emergency services, not including those already dead before ambulance arrived. Not that he was particularly interested in the subject, just having a small talk while he felt mostly bored by yet another so called expert who lacked basic logics.

One of the organizers took the microphone to announce the next speaker, but Hannibal didn't pay him any attention as he was shaking hands with the Sinai Hospital director recently elected by the board. As the new speaker cleared his throat before speaking, people became silent and Hannibal turned over to listen to him. Nothing prepared Hannibal to face Michelangelo's David, living and breathing, here in the Renaissance Harborplace hotel ballroom. He was stunningly beautiful! Hannibal's movements, as he turned, attracted the attention of the speaker who looked unconsciously in his direction, azure blue gaze met amber one, as if hell and heaven broke free. For a few seconds, they both stopped breathing and were unable to regain control of their actions. Then Hannibal automatically gave a blissful smile and the speaker cleared his throat again before pointing the laser at the slide on

the screen behind him. Nothing else indicated that their lives were irremediably entwined from now on…

Will Graham, as Hannibal read his name at the bottom of the slide, was addressing the perspective of vicious cop killers, and how they aim to inflict fatal wounds that make their victims slowly bleed to death. He demonstrated a surprising insight of their way of thinking. Hannibal knew a lot about the way killers think… Even though his interests were more inclined towards surgery, he had taken psychology into account, increasingly carried away by his natural analytical aptitude. Hannibal was now intrigued with this handsome and shy FBI agent and felt uneasy, since he could not comprehend the sudden weight in his lower belly. He spent the next twenty minutes studying the harmony of this David's face hidden behind glasses, his Greek profile, how his lips turned up when he laughed nervously, the soft curls of his silky dark hair, in contrast with the way he wore his body like an armor too big for him, trapezius, neck and shoulder muscles stiffened by stress and self control.

The structure of his speech and the way he presented his arguments showed a flawless logic and a well above average intelligence. Hannibal was under Will's spell and kept staring at him smiling blissfully. The speaker, no doubt feeling the insistence of his gaze, glanced furtively in his direction at regular intervals. At the end of his presentation, the organizer took the microphone again to invite the participants to go directly to the restaurant on the second floor where a reception was waiting for them. Hannibal wanted to approach the FBI agent, but Will was already caught up by a group of participants, who apparently had questions about criminal entomology he had written, concerning insects helping to date the moment of death. Hannibal definitely wanted to know more about Will Graham.

Absent minded, Hannibal went to the reception while exchanging banalities with the colleagues who surrounded him. His head was busy otherwise. He was waiting for Graham's arrival and an opportunity to talk to him. When Will finally arrived, Hannibal merely looked up from his seat at the corner table to meet his gaze. And Will walked directly towards Hannibal's table and sat down in front of him. Brief introductions were made, and then they simply began talking about everything and anything. Hannibal had never been so caught up in a discussion with another – not even with his fellow medical colleagues, not even with his own wife. Unconsciously, Hannibal fingered his wedding ring. Will's eyes glanced at his fingers then back up to Hannibal.

Hannibal mumbled the usual string of sentences regarding his wife and married life. Will in turn told him about having more intimate connections with animals. "I… I have seven dogs." Will's shy smile and laughter did strange things to Hannibal. He kept brushing it off, trying to dampen those feelings and writing them off as a brief infatuation. "You feel better connected with animals rather than humans. It would also explain your distaste for eye contact." Hannibal answered. "Are you… psychoanalyzing me? I… I hate that! You won't like me when I'm psychoanalyzed!" Hannibal gently held Will's wrist before he could get up to leave. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it as an intrusion in your privacy. Merely an observation. I find you… interesting, Will Graham". Will just huffed. "Well, I don't find YOU interesting".

Hannibal would have found it rude, but then he saw the crinkle at the corner of Will's blue eyes. They both began to chuckle.

They continued talking, well into the afternoon. Hannibal's eyes flickered over Will's full, pouty lips, and he could swear the other man was looking at him the same way. He could only fool himself for so long. What he felt for Will was not a passing fancy. No, this… this was something more. And so when he knew he had to pursue this beautiful man, he braced himself to ask Will out to dinner. "Will, they have a nice restaurant here, the Watertable, with a beautiful view on the bay. I would be delighted if you accept to be my guest tonight." Will raised his head and stared Hannibal in the eyes as if to try to read what motivated his invitation. "I... I don't know... The organizers reserved me a room for the night, but I was thinking of driving back home anyway to take care of my dogs."

Hannibal reached for his hand across the table and placed his hand on Will's with insistence as if to persuade him to stay. "Maybe you could call a friend to feed your dogs, and avoid the drive tonight as they announced a force 5 storm? And I would have the pleasure of sharing your company for the evening as well." Will smiled, amused by Dr. Lecter's manners, but also because he didn't remember if he was ever told of the *pleasure of sharing his company.* "The storm on the bay would be nice to observe from the restaurant. Yes, I suppose I could call a friend to feed the dogs, and use the hospitality of the symposium."

Hannibal held his hand and gently pressed it as if to seal the deal. "A la bonheur! I will make the reservation for 8pm right away to be sure to have a good table with the view of the bay." Hannibal left for the hotel reception desk to make the reservation. When he finished, he stopped at the entrance of the room to watch Will speaking on the phone, unaware of his scrutiny. God, he was still stunningly beautiful! Hannibal was slightly shaking with desire, how could that be? He recognized all the signs, he had a life before Bedelia. He had lovers on all sides of the spectrum. Was it only lust for possession of a beautiful being or something more... time would tell. For now he just had to have him at least once to satisfy his soul and see where destiny leads them.

Later in the evening, at the appointed time, Hannibal walked into the restaurant as if he owned the place, scanning the tables and chairs, then saw Will seated at the table by the large windows. The same blissful smile illuminated his handsome face. His lovely 'David' kept fidgeting, glancing around the place as if hoping no one would notice him. Even in the dimmed lighting of the restaurant and the lights reflected from the bay, Will looked so picturesque. Hannibal wanted to draw him, as many times as he could, in various poses. For the first time since very long, he felt alive again by all the fibers of his being. He breathed deeply and went to the table smiling, magnetically attracted and willing to go with the flow.

Hannibal put his left hand on Will's shoulder as he extended his right to shake hands "Good evening, Will!" - "Good evening, Dr Lecter…" - "Hannibal, please. I believe that at this point first name basis is acceptable." Will grinned, slightly turned his face on the side and locked

eyes with Hannibal in an interrogative pose “And which point is it... Hannibal?” - “Let's explore that while we dine, shall we?” They smiled at each other and sat without breaking eye contact until the waiter approached them to bring them some iced water glasses. Temperature was suddenly very high indeed... They both knew that desire had invited itself to their table and was burning bright.

They ordered “Grilled Asparagus with Lemon Mosto” for Hannibal, “Roasted Wild Mushrooms” for Will, and “Gorgonzola and Truffle Crusted Dry Aged Bone-In NY Strip” for both. Hannibal chose a Chile 2009 Montes Taita Cabernet Sauvignon to accompany their meals. The conversation was going well, with many smiles and complicit laughs. Will radiated, Hannibal felt drunk with happiness. When the sommelier brought the second bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon, each of them were too lost in the aura of the other man to pay him any attention. The wine helped, Will seemed more and more relaxed, more voluble and his gestures wider. Hannibal wanted to know this other Will, deeply buried under the armor he now saw. Will was a surprise gift of life that kept giving, he thought to himself.

At one point Will touched his hand on the table with his fingers, and left them there. Hannibal did not dare move his hand for fear of losing physical contact and the magic of the moment. He stroked his hand unconsciously as he was telling him about his colleagues at Quantico and their school-boy pranks in the morgue. Hannibal automatically crossed his long and muscular legs, even if he was sure nobody could see his embarrassing state of hardness. The fact that despite the atrocious aftershave of his companion, he was able to smell the subtle scent of his arousal since they sat together, didn’t help him to keep a grip on himself. It was far more inebriant than the wine. It was an unusual state for Hannibal, not the fact that he generates lust in others, he was used to that, but the fact that his body responded to it. Involuntarily he closed his eyes to analyze, appreciate and memorize the feeling. When he opened them again with a sigh, he met Will’s eyes and saw it there too, the same longing and desire. Will had stopped talking and was watching him intensively. His attention was complete as he was appreciating the situation and how he wanted to react to it.

Hannibal was caught in his azure blue gaze again listening to his heart pounding loudly as Will swallowed hard “I... I know that I don’t want to sleep alone tonight…” - “I share the feeling...” answered Hannibal. Will grinned in a cute and alluring way and got up. “Let me first go to the bathroom before I embarrass myself further”. Watching Will head for the bathroom did nothing to help him get up, desire clenched like a fist in his gut. He swallowed hastily and took his phone from his pocket to type a short message to Bedelia: *Caught in symposium diner, too drunk to drive safely, staying at the hotel tonight. Good night.*

Will joined him at the cashier when he just finished paying, and they exited the restaurant together. Without thinking, Hannibal put his hand on the small of Will’s back and let him pass through the door first. His hand stayed there while they headed towards the elevator. As the door opened, a stout man staggered out. He looked up, saw the closeness of Will and Hannibal and then sneered. “Stupid fags!” He muttered as he moved aside and walked away. Just before he turned, Hannibal noticed the rude man’s keycard - Room 304.

Will ignored the man, rolling his eyes. Hannibal pushed Will gently to let him enter the elevator first, and as soon as they were inside Will turned and crushed his mouth on Hannibal's. All thoughts of the rude man evaporated as Hannibal found himself in Will's embrace. Kissing Will was intoxicating. He worked his thigh between Will's legs and pressed. Will groaned into his mouth and Hannibal's brain nearly short-circuited. He'd never felt so helpless before in the arms of another. His arousal was even stronger now. If Hannibal wanted, he could just take Will here and now in the elevator. But he wanted this to last, wanted it to be special. Hannibal realized that whatever he was going to start with Will was not a one-time fling. When they reached Will's floor, Will pulled back grinning. He searched his pockets for the keycard. Hannibal slipped an arm around Will's waist, sliding a hand into the pocket of Will's pants to pull out the keycard. "Smooth, Dr Lecter" Will said, laughing. Hannibal grinned back, and kissed Will again.

Baltimore's Stellar Collision

If anyone was to ask Will Graham how his talk at the symposium went, they'd probably get a grunt and a mumbled "ok" from him. Truth is Will hates this sort of thing, but he's always coaxed into going (either by Jack Crawford, for the sake of the FBI, or by Alana Bloom who thinks Will needs to 'get out more'). Hence here he was, with some slides, and his memory churning out facts about the topic at hand. Seemed just like another of his lectures at Quantico, save for the tall European man in the front. The one with the high cheekbones and bespoke suit. *Damn, that was one fine specimen of human being!*

Will almost lost his train of thought. Once he was done with his speech, he wanted to quietly slip away, if only to seek out that *fine European specimen*. Will sighed, he really should stop hanging out with Beverly; she was the best friend slash annoying (yet lovable) sister, whom Will could actually have a decent conversation with. Unfortunately, Will's plans to search for this *fine European specimen* (Will really needed to find out his name!) was a no-go since he was crowded by people asking him questions. Oh well, maybe the guy would show up the next day. Once he finished with the last participant, Will heard his stomach growl. Right, he skipped breakfast this morning. He headed towards to reception room... only to see that the *fine European specimen* was seated alone in the corner (Will is SO going to find out his name!).

He all but marched up to the table and sat down in front of the man who introduced himself as Dr Hannibal Lecter, MD, who worked at the ER at John Hopkins. Will stumbled over his own credentials, feeling small and unimportant next to this ER doctor. However, as they ate and drank and talked, Will found himself caught up in Hannibal's aura. That lasted until he saw Hannibal playing with his ring. Of course... OF COURSE he was married! Oh well, the good-looking ones always are. While Hannibal talked about his marriage, Will deliberately mentioned his dogs. He always had a soft spot for animals, dogs in particular. Will thought Hannibal might mention his children next, only to be called out on his dislike for eye-contact. What the everloving hell! He had half a mind to just leave. Who the hell tries to psychoanalyse you on a first date? *Shit, it wasn't a date, was it? The guy's married!* Then Hannibal all but grabbed Will's wrist and Will could have sworn he felt a surge of electricity run up his arm. Before he knew it, Will had agreed for dinner... with this same *fine European specimen* named Hannibal Lecter (*who was married! What the fuck, Will?*).

While still at the reception room, he called Beverly. She agreed to babysit the dogs, then she giggled asking if he had a date. Was it really that obvious? Will grudgingly told her about Hannibal, but he left out the part about Hannibal being married. It wasn't that Beverly would judge him, maybe she might've, but Will just assumed this would be a one-time thing. Later, when he was in his hotel room, Will called Beverly again. This time she demanded more

details about his so-called date. A fling. Just two guys looking for some release. Before he hung up, Beverly gave him a few pointers on what to wear, not that he had packed an extensive wardrobe for the symposium anyway.

The evening couldn't arrive sooner. Will had showered and dressed, and waited at the reserved table for Hannibal. Of all the times, it was now that he seemed nervous. *It's just dinner, Graham, pull yourself together!* After glancing at his watch again, he cast a new look at the entrance for the tenth time. He registered a gray tartan suit, matching waistcoat, and paisley tie. Instantly, any self-conscious thought in Will's head vaporized by the wave of lust that slammed into him. Hannibal was HOT!

For all the talks about the restaurant, the view, the beautiful storm on the bay, the food, and the wine-list, Will's strongest memory would be on what happened after dinner. The way he and Hannibal could barely keep their hands off each other. Hannibal kissed like he was trying to suck the life out of Will. And Will was only too happy to let him. Each touch from Hannibal seemed to burn his skin. Nothing mattered more than getting into bed with Hannibal (and having his surgeon-hands take him apart). To hell with that guy who called them faggots, Will almost wanted Hannibal to take him right there in the elevator. But Hannibal, ever the gentleman, wanted to wait till they entered his room. They stopped kissing once the elevator reached Will's floor. Staggering out, they held hands as they walked towards Will's room door. Hannibal slipped an arm around Will's waist, sliding a hand into his pants pocket to pull out the keycard. "Smooth, Dr Lecter", Will said, laughing.

He continued to laugh even as Hannibal kissed him. Oh, if Will was going to die tonight, he'll die a happy man! Once inside Will's room, Hannibal all but slammed the door and locked it. Before Will could reply with something witty, Hannibal pounced on him. Will's back hit the wall and his shirt was almost ripped away from his body. He realised the buttons were busy flying in different directions. "I'll get you a better shirt", Hannibal muttered, while mouthing Will's neck and shoulders. Will moaned. "Who... cares... just…" Will's hands all but grabbed and pulled at Hannibal's clothes, willing them to open and expose his firm body. Then Hannibal let go of Will, stepping back. Will whined in protest. Hannibal chuckled as he stripped out of his own clothes, then laid them carefully on an armchair beside the bed. Will laughed out loud. "So prim and proper... ooff!" Will grunted as he was pushed onto the bed. "I'll show you HOW prim and proper I am, Will Graham!"

Hannibal captured Will's mouth, not waiting for a reply, and proceeded to unbuckle Will's belt. "Surgeon... hands… nngh!" Hannibal smiled feral as he peeled Will's pants and underwear off. He descended, straddled his hips, his cock pressing into the other's. The sounds Will made spurred him on. "Don't... hold... back, William…" Will cursed. "Don't... call me that… only… only dad calls me that... when I've done something... wrong... oh god, your hands Hannibal!" Hannibal's hands seemed to be everywhere on Will's burning skin. As

he touched and groped, the vision of his sexy David, writhing under him and grinding against his erection, made him snap. Hannibal's open mouth was licking, sucking, biting, and marking Will all over. Will wrapped his arm around Hannibal's waist, tugging him even closer. He moaned desperately and again as his lover was savouring each and every parcel of his skin. Panting but loving every second of it as Hannibal's tongue was slowly licking his nipples, his belly button, all way down to his curly pubic hair. He eagerly shifted his hips up as he was shamelessly begging "Your mouth... please Hannibal!.. I... I need your mouth…" In response, a loud, unbridled growl of pleasure came from Hannibal's chest while he nosed into Will's balls.

Hannibal moved his thigh between Will's legs and pressed his erection into the other's cock, already red and dripping as he gripped it at the base. Will whined as the friction sent sparks through the small of his back. Without leaving him any respite, Hannibal bent over his lap and sucked him down. His whole body strained when he felt Hannibal's throat working around his cock. His hand grabbed a handful of Hannibal's hair while his hips raised from the bed in search for more, thrusting up of their own volition. Hannibal grabbed his thighs from underneath to pin him on the mattress and to enjoy him at ease. He gently suckled at the head of Will's cock, drew back to trace the ridges with his tongue, and lipped his way down to the base. Then again he sucked him off with obscene groans of pleasure. Will was a refined dish to savor languorously. He repeated this deliciously torturing foreplay again and again. Will was drowned in the ebb and flow of his pleasure that brought him to the edge of the cliff but Hannibal never let him jump off. The wet and sloppy sounds of Hannibal's mouth were only echoed by Will's desperate moans in rhythm with the breathing of the living universe. Time is present and eternal. Hannibal felt that Will gave in by the relaxed way his hand fell to the bed. His fingers then caressed the curve of Will's ass, traced his opening with just enough pressure for Will's body to let him inside. The burn of the breaching electrified Will's brain making him shut his eyes tight, open his mouth in a muttered scream, clenched his fist on the sheet, and relaxed his muscles there, all at once. For an instant, engraved in his mind palace, Hannibal's thinking shut down as he was lost between lust and adoration for his so beautiful, so sensual David.

"Lube… and condoms… inside the…" Will panted. "No... condoms... I… I'm… I haven't…" Hannibal's sentence was lost in Will's mouth. "Right... who cares... just fuck me already!" Will urged, kissing Hannibal and pulling him closer. Hannibal pulled back only to pull open the drawer of the bedside table. He fumbled around for the lube. "Where... did you…" Will sat up a bit. "In my bag... it's under the bed…" Hannibal was up just like that, and on his knees on the carpet dragging out Will's duffel bag. Will laid back, trying not to laugh while catching his breath. "This is... crazy. I've…" Will's laughter sounded like the woodwind section of an orchestra, and Hannibal imagined playing it over and over in his mind palace. "You've what, Will? Have you not…" Will laughed again. "No! God... no... I mean yes, I have done this... but I... I've never... you know... a one-night stand…" Hannibal frowned. Then he crawled above Will, caressed his face and kissed him tenderly. "This is not a one-night stand, Will. I want this to be more... but if you..." Will pulled Hannibal towards him and

kissed back. “Me too... I... I don’t want this to end, Hannibal.” This was all Hannibal needed to urge him further.

Hannibal shoved Will back firmly against the pillows and slid his hands along Will’s legs. With reverence he murmured “You are beautiful, Will.” He spread and braced Will’s legs open with his own. He opened the small bottle of transparent, viscous liquid and coated his fingers. While he bent over and captured Will’s mouth again, his fingers reached down under his balls, circling his opening, pressing slowly against the muscle. Will tensed instinctively and whined, then he relaxed and spread wider for him. Hannibal licked gently under Will’s chin and his lips felt the pressure of his life flow against his throat. He brushed his teeth there, then moved against his ear and whispered “How do you touch yourself when you’re alone?.. Tell me what you want...” Without waiting for an answer, he gently insinuated one finger into Will’s heat. Will groaned, a mix of pain and pleasure. “I... I want you... inside me... please…” To confirm he pushed himself against Hannibal’s hand to feel him further inside.

Hannibal kissed Will’s throat, hot and open mouth, tasting salt and smelling copper. He slid two slippery fingers back inside Will who moaned and shifted restlessly to meet the insistent penetration. Hannibal twisted his fingers to stroke over Will’s prostate “Oh, god!..” Will stiffened and arched up against his hand. Hannibal groaned in the back of his throat and slid his other hand into Will’s hair, claiming his mouth hard and tugging him back into the pillow. Will reciprocated the untamed demanding kiss and slid his tongue in Hannibal’s mouth. He enjoyed the sensation of Hannibal’s body weight, keeping him ground and safe while he was overwhelmed by the touches, kisses, Hannibal’s feral lust, but also the blossoming of his own too long banked libido. He felt all at once lost, wanting, but most of all... alive.

Hannibal enjoyed this immensely. He wanted to take Will apart, see how this beautiful man beneath him worked. While Will gasped and tried to catch his breath, Hannibal pushed in another finger. Will’s back arched again and he groaned. Panting he grabbed onto Hannibal’s shoulders. “I… I want your... cock… please…” Will pleaded. Hannibal sucked on the sensitive skin of Will’s inner thigh. “My... beautiful... David…” Will frowned, then laughed. “It’s Will… unless… unless David’s the name of your wife…” Between wet kisses, Hannibal grinned “Michelangelo cut white marble daily for 3 years to see his David... I saw you as soon as you appeared to me in this ballroom… I know it would seem preposterous... but I felt something very strong right away…” He bent over Will to give him a soft kiss on his forehead reverently. “I’m... I’m not a…” Hannibal kissed Will’s lips. “Darling... don’t tell me you’ve never looked at yourself in the mirror…” Will chuckled. “I’m not… come on, Hannibal! I’m nothing special…” Hannibal just stared back at Will. “I think you’re beautiful, Will Graham. And I will keep saying it over and over until you believe me... and believe it yourself.”

Hannibal removed his fingers and pulled back, but his eyes were still on Will. Hannibal knelt back and uncapped the lube and began to prepare both himself and Will. As he began to thrust into Will, Hannibal felt as if he'd found the missing piece of his life's puzzle. He and Will seemed to fit so perfectly. Even as Will wrapped his legs around Hannibal and his ankles dug into Hannibal's ribs, he only felt pleasure and ecstasy. The musical sounds of Will's moans and screams made Hannibal feel like the sole audience of a chamber concert. Oh, what a bliss! He had other partners before, Hannibal was no stranger to sex, but here and now, in this very bed, his 'David' looked so wanton as he moaned and panted and gasped, calling out Hannibal's name. "More... harder... oh god, Hannibal... please!" Will's body moved in the same rhythm as Hannibal's. "Patience... my beautiful David…" Hannibal panted with every thrust. When they both climaxed, Will came first screaming Hannibal's name. Hannibal followed soon after, Will's name on his lips. Then they paused breathing hard, trying to catch their breaths. Hannibal rested his head on Will's shoulder as Will lay back on the bed. When Hannibal moved to pull out off Will, he felt Will's hands grasp him. "No... stay... stay in me... a while longer…" Hannibal honoured Will's request, feeling he himself never wanted to let go of his 'David'.

Fusion of Subatomic Particles

Her mother once told her, when she was about twelve, that she would be happy should she marry her best friend. The logic being that you would want to marry someone who understands you and accepts you for who you are, rather than one who merely wants you for your physical attributes. So when the Lecter family brought up this idea with her family, Bedelia said yes eagerly. After all, she had known Hannibal for so long and she considered him her best friend. They shared a love for arts and opera (even the ballet sometimes). Truly, they were a perfect couple - both came from influential families, both had lucrative careers, and apparently they both had a perfect set of genetics (should they decide to start a family).

Five years of marriage and Bedelia felt as if she was back at university sharing a house with a fellow student. It wasn't that Hannibal ignored her. Bedelia felt... bored! Yes, completely and utterly bored with the whole idea of marriage. Maybe she expected too much from this arrangement; well, that's what it was, wasn't it? A mere arrangement, a contract of sorts signed between the Lecter and the Du Maurier. Truly it was boredom that made her first reciprocate Frederick's occasional teasing. Teasing which later led to a little harmless flirting.

Then one evening after the opera (where she went to alone because Hannibal was suddenly called by the hospital), she bumped into Frederick Chilton and ended up sharing a late supper at his house. When Frederick kissed her, Bedelia took a chance and kissed him back. They ended up in his bed. When she left for home early the next morning, Bedelia thought of a plausible excuse to explain herself to Hannibal. But then she didn't need to, since Hannibal was still at the hospital. As she soaked in the hot tub, her mind wandered back to Frederick, her colleague-turned-lover. She was not ashamed to admit it, Frederick was a good lover. He had quite the stamina too. Was this what she lacked in her life? Did she crave passion and a little attention?

Soon, Bedelia and Frederick indulged in their secret past time. Sometimes, if their afternoons were free, they would have it out in the office. It was dirty and exciting, and Bedelia longed for it. She, of course, made sure that Hannibal would never find out. At first they planned to meet whenever Hannibal left Baltimore for his symposium talks. Occasionally, Bedelia would sneak out to meet Frederick if Hannibal was on call for the midnight shift. This time Bedelia grew bolder; she had planned to meet Frederick for a few hours while Hannibal was at the Renaissance Harborplace. The timing had to be precise, lest Hannibal came home unexpectedly and caught them. This time, Bedelia invited Frederick over. When she greeted him at the door, he looked around nervously.

“Just get in here! You don’t have to worry about neighbours…” Bedelia literally dragged Frederick in. “I’m more worried about Hannibal coming home and finding me in his bed with you!” Frederick took off his coat and hung it on the oak wood rack. “He’s not coming back till after 9 tonight” Bedelia answered with a grin as she pulled Frederick in for a kiss. He kissed back enthusiastically. They kissed and clawed at each other as they walked up the stairs to the bedroom. Later, Bedelia slipped on her robe and went down to the kitchen to get some food. Hannibal never liked them eating in bed, but since he was not here she was going to take the advantage. Frederick chuckled. “Food? Hoping to get in another round before he returns?” Bedelia shoved a cherry tomato into Frederick’s mouth. “Well, if you want to I’m game. Hannibal hates getting crumbs on the bed” Bedelia said as she poured them both some wine. Frederick moved closer, nosing her neck. “And so you’re eating in bed... with your colleague... while he’s out”. Bedelia laughed.

Once they were done eating, they lazed around in bed talking about their career. Frederick wanted to hand the clinic over to Bedelia since he was hoping to be the administrator of the Baltimore Hospital for the Criminally Insane. “You want to work with criminals? These men kill for sport, Frederick. Do you have any idea what you’re getting into?” “Bedelia, this will be good for my book…” “Book? Oh, yes… the book” Bedelia rolled her eyes playfully. Frederick had long been hinting about publishing a book on his experiences as a psychiatrist. Just as she was about to throw another dig at his attempt to publish, her phone beeped.

“Shit! Is that Hannibal? Is he coming back?” Frederick almost tripped on the blanket when he jumped out of bed. He started picking up his clothes as Bedelia unlocked her phone. It was Hannibal after all. However, the message he sent surprised her - *Caught in symposium diner, too drunk to drive safely, staying at the hotel tonight. Good night.* - Hannibal never had too much to drink at a symposium. Even at parties, he knew his limits and more often than not it was Bedelia who ended up a little tipsy by the end of the evening. She frowned at the screen, wondering if she read it right.

“Well? It was Hannibal, wasn’t it? He’s coming back?” Frederick was in a panic, standing there naked clutching his wrinkled shirt to his groin. “Shut up and get back in bed… he’s not coming home tonight.” Bedelia glanced up at Frederick, who stared back in disbelief. “What? He’s not…” Bedelia tugged Frederick’s arm and forced him to sit beside her. “He’s not coming back, Frederick. He just sent me a message. God knows what he’s getting up to there. I don’t care right now”. Bedelia put her phone back on the bedside table, near the lamp. Then she untied her robe and let it fall elegantly exposing her naked body. “I want you to fuck me again. Hard... vicious... I don’t care... just do it!” Frederick was all too eager to please her again.

Black Sunspot

Something caused Will to wake up. But instead of the usual jolt from his nightmares, this time Will was awoken by the light brushing of his skin, and the slight movement of the mattress. Will kept his eyes closed and just listened to the sounds around him. When he finally decided to open his eyes it was only to see the retreating back of an already dressed Hannibal, as he left Will's hotel room. Immediately Will's eyes opened wide. Hannibal left. Did he regret what happened? Was he going back to his wife? Will wanted to jump out of bed and chase after his lover, plead him to return. Instead, he rolled onto his back and blinked up at the ceiling. The only light emitting into the room was from the streetlight outside the window. Will sighed. Yes, perhaps this was for the best. What did he really expect from sleeping with a married man? He thought about getting dressed and maybe packing his bags. His body however was not willing to move. Damn if it wasn't the best sex he'd ever had! Will was sore all over and didn't mind it. Neither did he regret it.

Now it seemed that Hannibal regretted it, given that he'd gotten dressed and left without saying a word to Will. *Maybe I should call Beverly*, Will thought. He groped the bedside table for his phone. Upon feeling the smooth glass of the screen, Will paused. He decided not to call Beverly after all. Sighing, he tried to turn to his side to sleep. But the side he turned to was where Hannibal once slept, and Will could still smell his cologne on the pillow. He was about to toss the pillow off the bed when he heard the sound of his door opening. He shut his eyes and pretended to be asleep. Soft footsteps walked in and then the door closed again. The same footsteps neared Will's bed, then headed to the bathroom. Will listened to the sounds of running water and the faint murmur of someone humming. Then the bathroom door closed and soon there was weight on the mattress. Will kept absolutely still as if fearing that an intruder was going to hurt him. Familiar hands wrapped around his body, pulling him closer. Will realised that Hannibal had returned, but where did he go in the first place? Too glad to have Hannibal back in bed with him, Will snuggled up to Hannibal and eventually fell asleep again.

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Hannibal was lying feeling spent and content of just hearing Will breathing peacefully beside him, feeling his warmth against him. But something came back to his mind, the rudeness of this drunk man who sneered at them when they got in the lift. Nothing important really, but a little dirty spot on a pristine evening and an important event in his life as he already understood it. Slowly, Hannibal crawled out of the bed making sure he didn't wake his beloved. He quickly dressed and left the room. Knowing that there might be security cameras and clients walking around near the main lift, he deliberately took the service elevator to the ground floor. He exited the hotel through the back door and walked to the parking lot. From his booth, he pulled out a canvas bag. Glancing around to make sure no one was about, he

grabbed the bag and walked back towards the back door. Taking the service elevator again, he pressed the 3rd floor.

When he reached the 3rd floor, Hannibal searched for Room 304. From his bag he retrieved a small apparel looking like an old calculator. A cable with a white card was attached to it. He inserted the card in the locked door and press a button on the apparel. A click announced the door was open as confirmed by the green light on the lock. Hannibal gripped the doorknob, opened the door and walked in quietly. From the sounds of snoring, he realised the rude pig was in his bed. Perfect! Opening his canvas bag again, Hannibal pulled out the plastic overalls and wore it over his clothes. Then he picked up his leather pouch which contained his sharpened and well-cared-for surgeon tools. Only the scalpel and other smaller blades this time; he didn't bring the bonesaw, nor did he have the time to take the pig's corpse to his basement to cut him up. He had to use what he could for now. Pouch in one hand, and a syringe in another, Hannibal walked up to the bed. The pig snorted and then suddenly blinked awake.

Before he could open his mouth, Hannibal was already plunging the syringe into the pig's neck with one hand over his mouth. As he passed out from the mild sedative, Hannibal could smell the rancid breath and he cringed. What a disgusting pig this is! All the more Hannibal would enjoy the torture. But even so, he didn't want to spend too much time to rectify this mistake of nature... He was already aching to feel Will's body warmth. He was surprised to feel himself already so taken by this longing. Tying the pig up with a rope from his bag, he thought about gagging the disgusting creature, so that no one would interrupt his 'art'. Now that the pig was tied and gagged, Hannibal quickly set to work. He went through his instruments, wondering which to begin with. By then, the pathetic excuse of a human being was beginning to stir. The pig's eyes were rolling in fear and disbelief, as he realised he was tied up. He could not really see who the man before him was because of the plastic overalls. Hannibal smiled to himself. Those frightened eyes only made him more excited.

The pig began to struggle against the ropes, then he whimpered as if pleading to Hannibal. Looking at Hannibal like he would give him the answer to the main question: what is the meaning of life. Hannibal cut the skin on his chest over his heart. The red river of life gushed out, splashing against the plastic suit. But Hannibal moved away so that most of it flooded the bed sheets like a beautiful rose. A tribute to his lover that cleansed the pig's sneer. The pig screamed through the gag and his body jerked. Hannibal ignored it and continued to work on his creation. With his gloved hands, he reached into the pig's chest cavity and went for his ribs, breaking two of the rib bones to take his beating heart out. Under the pain, the pig fainted just in time so he didn't see himself die. Too bad, but Hannibal was more interested to draw his statement as he now secured the symbol of its meaning. Hannibal carefully removed the heart, slicing away the veins and arteries. The pig's body jerked harder, and his eyes opened wide. Void as his lost life was. Then the pig slumped, dead to the world with his eyes

still open. Hannibal held the blood covered organ and looked at it, several recipes already forming in his mind. He put the heart into the small cooler inside the canvas bag.

Then Hannibal walked back to the dead pig and removed the gag. The body was still warm and not in rigor yet so it was still easy to manipulate. Hannibal used his scalpel again and carved open the pig's throat, cutting the base of the tongue quickly and with precision. Slicing through the sinew and ligaments, he drew it out through the mouth. Throughout the procedure he kept the throat open with surgical clamps. Hannibal had a feral smirk on his face, he was remembering Aesop's meals with "the tongue as the best and worst meat". He already saw in his mind how Will would so much enjoy the pig's tongue with capers. However, Hannibal thought about discarding it. But then why waste it when he could turn it into art? So Hannibal sliced and carved, and later the pig's tongue became the focal point of his creation. Setting aside the tongue, Hannibal began to remove the ropes that bound the pig, and also removed the pig's clothing. Once the corpse was naked on the blood-soaked sheets, Hannibal stepped back and frowned. *How should I present my gift to Will?* he thought, knowing that eventually the FBI will be called in and Will would be looking at his work of art.

Hannibal stretched out the pig's body like the famed Da Vinci sketch of the Vitruvian Man. He secured the hands and feet to the four corners of the bed frame. Hannibal then sewed up the gaping hole on the pig's throat, and then decided to sew up the pig's mouth and chest too. Looking around the room later, Hannibal found a crystal ashtray. Taking it to the bathroom, he washed the ashtray and wiped it. He found some scented tissues in the toiletry cupboard above the sink. He lined the ashtray with the tissues and walked back to the bed. He placed the cut tongue on top of the tissues and left the ashtray on the bedside table. Hannibal was satisfied with his drawing. He quickly took off his bloody gloves and murder suit and disposed of them in the trash bag he took from his canvas bag. Once Hannibal cleared up Room 304, he listened for a few seconds through the door. Silence was like a cool wave on him. He looked back, reviewing the room for the last time. He had cleaned everything, left his regards to the FBI.

He was ready to exit, and surprised to feel how much he longed for Will's warmth. He should take some time to think that through. It was too fast, exciting but also a little destabilizing. True, he still felt amazed and in awe. What if Will regretted that? Will knew he was married. Will was young, he could have anyone he desired. Would he choose a married man, who indulged in human flesh? Hannibal left and went out to his car again. Leaving the canvas bag in the booth of his Bentley, he walked back to the hotel and took the service elevator up to the seventh floor. He entered Will's room, using the keycard he had taken with him, and walked in. As he locked the door his eyes fell on the silhouette of his lover on the bed. The dim moonlight cast shadows into the room, but Hannibal could see the distinct shape of Will Graham huddled against his pillow. Desire stirred within him again so Hannibal quickly cleaned up in the bathroom and crawled back into bed. He gathered Will into his arms,

breathing in Will’s natural scent... and the faint scent of their love-making. A small smile graced Hannibal’s lips while he stroked Will’s soft hair.

Blood Tide of the Midnight Sun

Carmen rolled the cart out of the lift. It was low season and she was happy to work with no stress now as there was much enough time to clean the few occupied rooms. She went about from room to room, changing the sheets, replacing the towels, putting new luxury toiletry bottles and soap. She opened the door to the room with her pass. She turned and took the vacuum cleaner, pushed the door to enter and put it on the floor... She stood frozen unable to move or cry... *Blood... Blood everywhere…* She stuttered and yelled running through the corridor like the devil was after her. Fortunately, she bumped into Tanner, the manager, who scolded her, displeased "What's going on? Why are you yelling, Ms Dale?" Carmen finally found her voice and choked out "Oh my god! Blood!.. there's… his tongue... in an ashtray… oh god!" And Carmen fainted, but not before Tanner's PA caught her.

Tanner marched up the corridor, right up to the opened door of Room 304. He stepped inside and felt his breakfast rising up to his throat. "Good god!" He fumbled into his pocket, finding his cellphone. His fingers were shaking as he dialled 911. Even his voice shook as he spoke to the operator. "Hello? Hello? There has been a murder at the Baltimore Harborplace hotel. We need the police to come immediately. Please… please keep this quiet... we have a lot of customers, we don't want them to be afraid. Please ask your men to be discrete…" - "Could you, please, identify yourself, Sir? And please repeat your message... slowly… please, calm down, Sir... I know this is an emergency" - "Yes, I'll try... but it's horrible! I never saw anything like this... the man was cut open... for Christ's sake!.. Open like a pig!.." - "Please Sir, I need you to calm down and give me the information I need for the patrol to find you…" - "Yes, yes, I know…" he was breathing deeply, - "I am Mr. Tanner, the hotel manager of Baltimore Harborplace, the murder took place in the room 304, please tell your men to hurry up…" - "A car is being dispatched now, please don't touch anything and be sure nobody touches anything either" - "Yes... of course… of course… thank you!" Tanner ended the call, his heart still beating rapidly.

By the time his PA walked in, Tanner managed to control his rapid pulse. Tanner's PA, Mathew Summerfield, was about to ask his boss what the matter was when he too froze at the sight of the corpse on the bed. "Oh... oh god!" Matthew said, cupping his own mouth he ran towards the bathroom and began throwing up. Tanner turned away, deciding to stand outside the room and trying not to imagine what he had seen. Once his PA came out again, he quickly told him to inform the staff that no one was to come up to Room 304 for any cleaning or room service. Then he called the front desk to know who was the customer who ended up murdered in his hotel. He learned that he was a renowned TV evangelical priest. Of course, he thought to himself, he needed to be a celebrity... Now Tanner was worried about the bad publicity his hotel would get from this bloody mess, if the news went public. *Fuck! Fuck! With all that bloody mess, a staff meeting will be needed... together with the public relations department.*

Two policemen in uniform came out of the lift, Tanner called them over and showed them the door without following them. One of the uniformed men pushed the door and seeing the scene just took his walkie-talkie to call the station. “Who are you calling?” Tanner asked the policeman. “I don’t want too many police around… I want this quiet…” “Sir, please... this... this is… Look, Baltimore Police Department can’t handle this. We’re calling the Feds”. The other policeman pulled Tanner aside before he could protest. He then explained to the manager that they needed the help of the FBI because of the nature of the crime scene. That sort of crime, he had already seen too many times, here in Baltimore, it had the signature of the Chesapeake Ripper. Tanner became even more anxious. If more people would find out that a serial killer had come to the hotel, his business season might be over!

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Jack Crawford received a call from the Baltimore PD the moment he entered his office. Apparently, the Chesapeake Ripper was busy last night at the Baltimore Harborplace. The name rang a bell... Yes, the symposium where he sent Will despite his protest. As soon as he got off the phone with the police, Jack intercommed the forensics lab. “Katz? You, Zeller and Price pack up and meet me outside. Our ‘friend’ has been busy at Baltimore Harborplace…” Before Beverly Katz could reply, Jack hung up. Then he called Will’s cellphone. Will blinked awake, hearing the ringing sound. When the fog lifted from his mind, he realised that his cell phone was ringing. He sat up letting the blanket slide down his naked body, and reached over to the bedside table for the phone. “Hello? Oh, hi Jack... What?.. Third floor? Ok... I’ll be there… in twenty minutes.”

Will sighed. This was supposed to be a sort of mini-vacation, yet the hotel was now a crime scene. Jack was already on his way to the hotel, with the forensic team. Scratching his neck, Will felt teeth marks near his throat and shoulders. He felt a shiver run through his body. * *Yes, last night was indeed the best sex he’d ever had!** Once he got out of bed, he automatically reached for his phone again. There was a message from Hannibal: *Will, I haven't been this happy since a very long time. You put a bright smile on my face this morning, while I had almost forgotten the sensation… Hope to see you soon. Hannibal,* Will chuckled to himself. He had Hannibal’s number... and a sweet message. Ok, time to go see what the fuss was about on the third floor. Will had a quick shower and towelled himself. Then he pulled out some clothes from his bag and put them on. Just before he left his room, he ran his fingers through his curls and remembered the feeling of Hannibal’s fingers running through his hair… right, there’s no time to fix the hair anyway.

By the time Will stepped out of the elevator on the third floor, he noticed a young man in a suit talking to one of the maids. She was sobbing and shaking badly. The young man noticed Will and was about to stop him from walking towards Room 304, when Will took out his badge and flashed it. The young man's eyes widened then he pointed Will towards another

man who was standing outside. The other man was much older, hair almost white, and his skin looked pale as if he had seen a ghost. *Ok, this must be really bad* , Will thought to himself. He introduced himself to the older man who immediately identified himself as the hotel manager.

Will showed him his FBI badge and Mr Tanner pointed towards Room 304 wide open door. Will entered the room and stared at the corpse on the bed. He recognized right away the Da Vinci Vitruvian Man design. Yes, indeed this was a Chesapeake Ripper's art scene. Will carefully moved closer to the bed. But seeing the bed and the sheets, his mind wandered to the night before - as he laid on similar sheets, twisting them while Hannibal fingered him. Will felt lust clenching his gut, the tiny hairs on his arms stood. *Stop thinking about the hot sex you had!* Will shook his head and tried to concentrate again. Taking in a few deep breaths, Will looked at the design again and felt the imaginary pendulum swing:

I enter the room... you're asleep... but not for long. You don't put up a fight... I overpower you... somehow... yes, puncture of the syringe on the right side of the throat... then I tie you up... not like this… I tie you up to subdue you. I... I decide to carve you… but where do I start? Chest? Throat? Chest first... blood soaks the sheets only from your chest. I... I take a trophy... perhaps your heart. I desire it... I want your... your heart... but why? Then... then I... slice your throat... the purpose is to get your... tongue. I cut out your filthy tongue, because... of what you said... because you're… RUDE!*

Will's thoughts suddenly stopped. *Rudeness... that's why the Chesapeake Ripper kills!* "Rude!" "Me? I'm not rude… I wished you a good morning, but I don't think you heard me…" Beverly's voice made Will turn around. Will met Beverly's grin. "So… rude?" Will wiped his face, took another deep breath and said, "Yeah... I... I think I know why he's killing them.." Jimmy Price came up and stood beside Beverly. "Why WHO's killing WHO?" Will's eyes looked around, seeing Jack outside talking to the manager. "The... the Ripper... he's… he's killing the rude. That's why he cut the tongue out... maybe... maybe he...", Will pointed to the corpse, "he must have... done something... or said something to the Ripper... and... yeah…"

Jack was holding the driver licence of the victim. He held it up to Will's line of sight. Apparently the guy was a priest. Strange to find a holy man in such a luxury hotel in Baltimore, Will thought. Jack looked back at the picture with attention "I'm sure I already saw this guy…" Price blinked and frowned. Then he said, "Yeah, I recognize him. He was a famous TV Evangelical priest... then there was this whole thing about him molesting little girls and stuff…" Beverly continued "Whoa! Pedophile priest? Hmm... maybe the Ripper wanted to get rid of that scum…" Will began pacing the room. "I still think it's because the guy was rude... but damn it! I... I feel like I've met the guy... but... I…" Beverly touched Will's shoulder gently "It will come to you, Graham... that super-brain of yours will

remember soon…" Jack said to Will "Anything else you see on the killer? Could it be a vigilante trying to disguise his murder as a Ripper's ones?" Will answered "I don't know for sure Jack... but I don't feel it's a vigilante... The precision of the cut... the artistic design... it feels like the Ripper to me…" "OK, let me know if something else comes to you..." Jack clapped a hand on Will's shoulder and then walked out of the room to question the manager again. "I will... as always, Jack..."

Will watched the scientific team work for a little while, but nothing else came to him at that moment. His belly reminded him that he haven't had breakfast yet, so he left them. As he entered the lift, he had a flash of yesterday's evening doing the same thing with Hannibal... That drunk bully who jostled them without apologizing, calling them "faggots". Yes, that was that same guy! He wanted to tell Jack, but the doors of the lift had already closed and he was going down. Then, he remembered that Hannibal left the room during the night... For sure, his brain was mad! Mixing all events to find sense... enough, he needed food and coffee urgently! Will entered the coffee shop with a big smile as he was now thinking of Hannibal. Thinking he should answer the small message he had sent him. Admittedly, he wanted to see him again for sure. This was almost frightening that he was so... **enamored... was it the right word?** Nevermind, for once he was sure. It was reassuring that maybe Hannibal apparently felt the same way, but who knows how far this story could go... a married man... *Let's see* .

He pulled out his phone and read Hannibal's message again. "Spill it out, Graham!" Will was startled, but managed to pull his arm back before Beverly could snatch his phone. "I've been dying to know how your date went last night... but, judging by the sex-hair and the hickeys…" Will felt his cheeks burning. "Shut up, Bev." Beverly sighed. "Come on! You're gonna see him again, right? I mean... the whole smiling at the phone and stuff…" "How did you know right away that it was a guy when I spoke to you on the phone yesterday?" Beverly narrowed her eyes. "Please… the only time you don't tell us all that you are in love, it's when you are in love... and it's always with a guy! Actually, I find it reassuring for my ego!" she smirked.

"How is this good for your ego?" Will asked, after the waiter brought him a sandwich and a coffee. "Believe it or not, Will, you are a very charming guy. And understanding that being your friend is a much more secure place than being your girlfriend, helps me to look somewhere else." Will chuckled "I won't be good for you, Beverly…" Beverly tapped Will's wrist as he reached for the cup of coffee. "You ARE a good friend, Will. Stop selling yourself short. Now, what's HIS name? Where's he from? Come on, details!" Will felt himself blushing again. "He's… he's a doctor… works at John Hopkins…" Beverly squealed "Oooo… Doctor! Way-to-go, Graham!" "Shut up!" Will looked away, wondering if his cheeks were even more red than before.

“I... he… Bev, you can’t tell anyone about this ok? I mean... it’s not that I…” Will sighed, ran his fingers through his hair and continued “Bev… he’s married…” Beverly’s eyebrows rose higher “Whoa! Erm... ok… ok… it’s…” Will leaned back in his chair. “Yeah, it’s not the best situation, but…” Beverly held up her palm “No... no, it’s... I mean, yeah, it’s kinda complicated... but Will... you can’t help who you like, right?” *You can’t control with whom you fall in love indeed* Will thought, and then he looked at his thought again *Am I really falling in love?! Is it not premature, so soon... I don’t even know Hannibal, don’t know what kind of music he likes, don’t know what kind of food he eats or don’t know where he grew up! I like the way he rolled the r, and his faint accent though... ok, maybe I really like the guy...*

Will went on with his private monologue for a good part of the day. Saying ‘hello’ to his colleagues at Quantico while feeling Hannibal’s skin against his, teaching in the amphitheater while hearing his name repeated again and again between moans as a prayer. He left in a hurry and almost ran to get to his car. He wanted to be home to read Hannibal’s message again and thought about what he wanted to text him in return.

Partial Eclipse

Pouring himself a rosé, Hannibal brought the glass up to his nose and then tasted it. He smiled, thinking of Will, wondering if Will would like rosé. Maybe Will would prefer a full bodied red wine? Or maybe white? He would have to ask him when they meet again. Two nights ago at the restaurant, Hannibal didn't care much for the wine, all his attention was on the curly-haired man sitting in front of him. He carried the glass into the lounge and placed it on top of his harpsichord. He sat down and let his fingers glide across the keyboard.

He was surprised by his own reaction. Feeling in awe all day long with a big smile that made the the nurses at the hospital turning their heads in his way more often than usual. He wanted to write something to get some distance from his feelings and analyse them. He was happy indeed, but he still had to be careful, his David was working for the FBI. He allowed himself to feel whatever was coming and transcribed them onto the music sheets. He wanted to compose a symphony about his David, his beautiful Ganymede's curls and milky skin. The sounds Will made when Hannibal thrusted deep into him... Unconsciously he was humming as he was deep in his mind palace enjoying the music that resonated joyously through the dark space now getting some sunlight.

"What are you playing?" Bedelia walked into the parlour, a glass of wine in her own hand. She preferred red wine, and didn't quite like rosé or white. Hannibal looked up from the harpsichord "Oh, just expressing myself. I had a good day at the hospital…" Bedelia rolled her eyes as she sat on the sofa. "You said that yesterday, I watched you... and you kept smiling to yourself. I've never seen you so happy Hannibal... Something happened?" Hannibal's only answer was that same mysterious smile again. "So you won't tell me? Fine…" Bedelia's voice was lost to Hannibal's ears as he continued to play. She continued to frown at Hannibal as he ignored her.

She found it odd that after his strange message two nights ago and his night at the hotel, his mood changed for the best. She didn't care that he had his secret garden, they respected their mutual space for years now. There was no common space to share to begin with. However, she enjoyed the luxury of her life, and she would not be made a fool through public rumors. Maybe Hannibal was having an affair... like her? But even so, she would have to make sure he never found about herself and Chilton. No, if ever a scandal would be exposed, it should be Hannibal's not hers. She intended to get the best financial arrangement if ever divorce was on the path in the near future. She would like to get her own life back, since this marital arrangement was a big mistake, but on her own terms.

Bedelia later searched the Internet. She was looking for a private investigator who wouldn't mind spying on Hannibal for a fair price. Yes, if she could find some proof that Hannibal was cheating, she could get a good divorce settlement. Not that she needed the money, more a compensation for her wounded ego. She came across the name Freddie Lounds. Lounds was a tabloid journalist, who seemed to employ dubious means in getting stories of her online page called 'Tattle Crime'. Ah! Perhaps Lounds might desire some extra income by snooping around. Bedelia noted down Lounds' email and phone number.

Hannibal was still enjoying his music composition when his phone rang. Glancing over the harpsichord, he noticed that his phone lit up and vibrated. He got up and walked over to pick it up. It was a message from Will. * *Miss you too much already. Do you have time for lunch tomorrow?* * Hannibal studied the message, knowing that it took Will two days to compose it. It was sufficiently neutral, lunch always is... but still he did state that he was missing him. Hannibal understood that Will was longing for him as he was longing for him himself. He didn't want to play the long game here. Feeling alive was a relief and he didn't want to bury that under false pretenses and over protective approach to avoid getting hurt in the process of courtship. He was also curious to know more about Will's investigation of the love gift he'd left him in room 304. The main and most important he would learn it from their shared desire for each other. Right now, he wanted to hear his voice and feel him blushing on the other side, as he knew he would, when he would tell him that he wanted to hear him moan from pleasure in his arms again.

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Will leaned into his armchair, exhausted from questioning and staring at crime scene photos. He hated that sometimes Jack Crawford expected miracles to happen. Will knew his… 'gift' was also a curse at times. But there was only so much he could do. Beverly finally made him leave and go home at a decent hour. Once he was back at Wolf Trap, he fed his dogs and played with them for a while. Then he showered, ate something himself, and decided to relax with a shot of whiskey. His dogs lazed around by his feet, happy that their master was home.

He remembered the message on his phone, and decided to finally reply it. He didn't know what to write back to Hannibal. After typing and deleting several messages, he finally typed *Miss you too much already. Do you have time for lunch tomorrow?* Before he could decide to erase it, he pressed the 'send' button and waited for Hannibal's reply. He sighed anxiously *Was it alright to say that I was missing him already? Doesn't it make me appear too needy?* His body was telling him one thing - he wanted him so much already, he could feel the desire coiling in his lower belly - but his mind was telling him something else - you still have to be careful not to get hurt. *Why did Hannibal leave the room during the night? Did he have any hobbies? Did he like animals, like me?*

Again he was a little upset to watch his mind wandering in the limbs of doubt and mixing information in an effort to serve him an improbable scenario. His phone rang and Will's heart skipped a beat. A message from Hannibal *Dear Will, I miss you too. I am afraid that lunch would not be an option for what I have in mind. I propose dinner at the French Cafe St-Germain, and maybe you would indulge me and spend the night with me again at my place downtown.* Will smiled brightly *Of course I will indulge you, you arrogant prick! Who the hell talks like that?* he thought to himself.

Will almost dropped his phone in his excitement. Yes, he most definitely wanted to meet Hannibal again. He wouldn't mind getting laid again... but that was just a bonus. Will just wanted to be in Hannibal's company. Was it because he was lonely? Maybe Alana was right, and he needed to go out more and make new friends. But then, no one understood him like Hannibal did. Hannibal seemed to really know his thoughts and feelings. Hannibal knew how to please Will and he never saw Will as something fragile or unstable. When they spoke, it was peer-to-peer, expert-to-expert, with a kind of shared admiration but also complicity. It was so refreshing to find someone with the same level of understanding, the same capacity for nuances and subtlety. Not being obliged to explain the links and references that allowed you to draw this hypothesis, or that conclusion.

Asteroids Field

Will sat in the waiting room of his psychiatrist. He hated these sessions. Dr Chilton (* *Oh, please call me Frederick!* *) made Will's skin crawl. His reasonings didn't make any sense. Will felt as if Chilton was trying to dissect his brain through talking. He did express an interest in exploring Will's empathy disorder. Will had no choice but to attend these sessions, since it was part of his evaluation for the FBI. Chilton would send a monthly report to Jack, an assessment of Will's mental state which would ensure Will's well-being was taken care of. God, Will did hate this routine!

Chilton's door opened, and an elegant blonde woman hurried out, her heels clicking rapidly as she left. She ignored Will and Will didn't mind. Chilton, on the other hand, was trying to tame down his hair and adjust his bowtie. * *So... Chilton had a little afternoon-delight in his office* ,* Will laughed to himself. If ever anyone caught Chilton having an affair with his patient, perhaps it would be a good excuse for Will to stop going to these dull sessions. Will stood up and walked into Chilton's office.

"Let's continue where we left off last week" Chilton sounded all too eager. Will sighed "I... I had a nightmare... about the latest case". Will swallowed and tried to recall his bad dream. * *He entered the room and there was the victim, put on display, as if the Ripper was presenting the corpse to Will. Something was cooking on a small stove in the corner. A figure dressed in black removed the pan and dished out the contents onto a plate. Will tried to see who the figure was, but the face was blurred. When he looked at the plate, there were eyeballs and a tongue*... * "He's eating them!" Will said aloud, almost jumping out of his chair. Chilton's eyes widened. His face looked like he was going to be sick any moment. "Who... who's eating… them???" Chilton said slowly, glancing from Will to his notebook as he scribbled furiously. Will stood up and began to pace on the floor. "The... the Ripper… he's… no wonder the organs are missing. He's not selling them... they're not trophies… he's eating them!"

Will then stopped pacing and took out his phone, dialling Jack's number. Chilton put down his notebook and grumbled. "We're not done! You... you can't just…" Will ignored Chilton. "Hello? Jack? It's me... yeah... erm… the Ripper's not selling the missing organs... he's eating them... yeah, yeah... ok… no I'm with Chilton… sigh! Ok, I'll finish the session first!" Will ended the call, huffed and sat down again. Chilton was still gaping at him, he didn't look too nauseous now and more frightened at the idea of cannibalism. The Ripper was another 'patient' Chilton was hoping to study, or perhaps he could write another book especially about the Ripper. "Listen, Will... while these... sessions of ours have been... rather... fruitful…" Will snorted and looked away. Chilton continued, "I... I'm afraid your… condition is..."

Will chuckled, "...under your care, doctor…" Will said sarcastically. Chilton bristled. "What I meant was, you need a proper… expert for your... erm… your…" Will rolled his eyes. "...for my DISORDER? You can just say it, Frederick. I know I'm... damaged!" Will spat the words out, angry suddenly at everything that had happened. **God, if only Hannibal were here…in the room with me* .* Chilton continued fumbling his explanation until he said something which snapped in Will's mind. "...a fun experiment?" Will glared at Chilton. "You think this is funny? Oh, let's all analyse the unstable empath... if he can think like a killer maybe he can become one!" Chilton quickly tried to calm Will down. "You misunderstood me, Will…" He laughed nervously. "I know what you're going through... these emotions... and the dreams… I understand your case perfectly..."

"You... you have NO idea about me, Frederick! Don't pretend to understand. And as for your stupid book…" Chilton was startled. "...I... the book is… I was only…" Will held up his palm. "I don't want to be mentioned in the book." "But it's part of my research!" Chilton insisted. Will spoke very slowly as if for Chilton to understand the threat underneath, "Frederick... this is not ethical... what would your colleagues say... or the FBI for that matter... if they learn you are using your patients without their consent to advance your writer's fantasies of fame to their detriment?" Will gave Chilton a sly grin, "How many experts with an empathy disorder work for the FBI? I would be discovered soon. I told you before, you won't like me when I am psychoanalysed. I don't like people messing with my head…"

Chilton's eyes widened, then he swallowed, "I…" "Think very carefully, Frederick... think before you answer…" Will sounded like he was threatening Chilton. By the end of the session, Will was given a referral to Dr. Du Maurier, who just happened to work at the same clinic. Only her office was at the other end of the corridor. This was the only option Chilton could come up with to save himself. If he carried on, Will might expose him or even sue him and Chilton didn't want to ruin his already shady reputation. On the other hand, Bedelia could be persuaded, between the sheets and pillows, to share her sessions with Will. And he would still have the material to finish his book. All patients are capricious, but Will Graham was special. A case like his could be what he needed to boost his professional reputation and secure the position he was looking for at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

At the same time, at the other end of the corridor, Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier was dialing Freddie Lounds' number. She had made up her mind to hire Freddie to spy on Hannibal, if only to confirm if he was having an affair. This way, Bedelia would be able to secure a good deal should they divorce. She was at the same time afraid of the social scandal, but hoping this to happen and feel free and alive again. Chilton was a much more suitable candidate for a husband. He was ambitious like Bedelia, and he also wanted to be known in the elite society.

Bedelia wondered what would have happened if she had married Chilton instead of Hannibal. Perhaps her life would have turned out differently.

She sighed and waited for an answer on the other side of the line. “Hello, Freddie Lounds on the phone, who is calling?” “ Hello, I am Dr. Du Maurier, I would like to use your services... this is a delicate situation I find myself in…” Freddie snorted on the phone, “Listen, lady... I don’t know what you think I do, but I don’t go sleeping around for money…” Bedelia grumbled, “I’m NOT asking you for such a thing! Listen, I know you’re good at... finding information. That’s what I want you to do. I want you to follow my husband... and find out if he’s cheating on me.” Freddie laughed. “Oh my God! You want me to be like... a private investigator? Whoa!” Bedelia grew impatient with the conversation. “I will be willing to pay you.” “Oh yeah? How much?” “If you’re as good as you claim, I can start with $150 an hour…” “A hundred and fifty bucks? Are you kidding me?” “Five hundred more if you bring me something good!” Freddie gasped, “Oh… wow! Erm... yeah... why not… wait! And how much will YOU get from this in your divorce settlement? Lady, I didn’t fall with the last rain…”

“Are you interested or not? I can always ask someone else…” Bedelia was really growing impatient with this woman. No wonder people loath Tattle Crime. “Ok, ok, get off your high horse... I will do it. I will send you the pictures as soon as I get something crunchy.” Bedelia heard some rustling of paper in the background. Then Freddie spoke again, “You’re… Dr. Du Maurier... hmm… wait a second! That means... your husband is... Dr. Hannibal Lecter - best surgeon at John Hopkins and major contributor to the Baltimore Arts Society and Opera?” Bedelia rolled her eyes, “Yes, now will you or won’t you do it?” “Oh, yes! That could be fun!.. But of course I could be discrete…” Bedelia was all ready to engage in another debate, but she understood that Freddie Lounds was maybe not the best person for the job. “I’ll wait for your pictures then, but please... be discrete for God’s sake, it is not one of your gossip columns.”

Freddie’s laughter could be heard again, and it grated on Bedelia’s nerves. “Hey, I can be discrete, lady... no problemo!” They both hung up at the same time. Bedelia a little nervous, not being sure of what she was doing anymore. Freddie with a big feral smile “Life's a bitch! But at least I’ll be making big bucks from this thing,” she thought to herself. Those people in high society always looked at her with disdain... how ironic was it that this spoiled princess was now calling her to frame her charming prince husband for adultery.

Shadow Satellite

Hannibal arrived at the Cafe St-Germain first. It was one of the rare places he affectioned in Baltimore. It reminded him of his years in Paris and how he learned to appreciate food and gastronomy. His past as a starving child didn't prepare him for the subtleties of the palate. His aunt Murasaki insisted on him eating slowly and appreciating the refined plates served to them by their Japanese chef. Not doing so was acting like an animal in her eyes. She was beautiful and he was eager to please her as a teenager, so he did learn to appreciate all the arts, at the table but not only... Actually, he felt a little like that teenager with butterflies in his belly. The idea made him smile. He was smiling much more since Will appeared to him as a Renaissance Adonis at the Baltimore Harborplace. He never thought he would ever meet someone like him, but somehow he waited for him all his life. How paradoxical that sounded like, he knew it was true. It was like looking in the abyss, thrilling and delicious.

Will sighed, "It's just dinner…" Playfully, Beverly smacked the back of his head, "Dinner with a HOT doctor... and you're probably gonna get laid again. So yeah, this IS a big deal Graham!" Will sighed and changed into the shirt Beverly took out from his cupboard. "Tuck the shirt in, you're not a slacker. You're a cute dog-loving fisherman." Will chuckled, "Yeah... if you say so…" Beverly glared at him, "I KNOW so! Jeez, Will... cut yourself some slack for once. You're a good looking guy… and you've got a great boyfriend now, so don't screw this up." "Bev, he's not… I mean… I don't know if this is a sure thing. He's married!" Beverly put her arm on Will's shoulder. "Will, you're happy... he makes you happy. So just go with it for now. I'll be here if it all goes down in flames." An hour later, Will was walking up to the front door of Cafe St-Germain. *Shit! It's one of those places where you pay like $50 for a starter!* Taking a deep breath, he walked in and mentioned his name to the maitre d'hotel. "Oh, Mr. Graham! Yes, Dr. Lecter is waiting for you at his usual table. Let me take you to him." Will followed the woman, keeping his head low, hoping that no one would notice him.

Freddie Lounds was seated at the corner table, trying to be discreet while she was looking at Hannibal alone at the table set for two. She did follow him from the John Hopkins hospital. Not difficult to stay on in the traffic as he drove the only Bentley in Baltimore. So yes, the charming prince was having an affair... Nobody takes a colleague to eat in such an expensive place, not even for business when your company is paying the bill. She was curious to learn who was the lucky woman that Dr. Lecter was courting with so much refinement. When she saw him enter the restaurant, she walked in too but sat in the corner. She ordered a cocktail and waited for Dr. Lecter's date to show up.

When a curly-haired young man appeared and sat down in front of Dr. Lecter, Freddie was disappointed. *Sigh, dinner with a friend. Damn it!* But when Dr Lecter reached across the

table and took the man's hand and kissed his knuckles, Freddie almost choked on her margarita. *He's banging a guy! Oh, this is precious!* Freddie slowly pulled out her camera and began to click without anyone noticing. She was smiling inside at the idea of princess Bedelia discovering that her prince charming was having an affair with a charming young... man! She would love to be a small mouse to see her face when she would open her mail and look at the pictures! Yeah, life's a bitch! On the other hand, she could use this information to her advantage... blackmail maybe... She still had to think about her options here.

Hannibal, unaware of Freddie's internal dialog, was smiling brightly to Will. Will answered his smile while he was reaching their table. A little too nervous than he wanted to appear, and very self-conscious. He sat down and Hannibal reached for his hand on the table. Hannibal kissed it without even waiting for the waiter to turn away. Will blushed from ears to toes, suddenly feeling very hot and exposed. Still he found himself unwilling to take his hand back. When his gaze locked with Hannibal's, nothing else existed anymore. Will didn't worry anymore about his choice of clothes, if anyone he knew could have seen him enter the restaurant, what the waiter may think, etc. He only wanted to feel Hannibal close to him again.

Freddie continued to watch and click her camera. Then as the waiter approached the table, the young man's head turned showing his profile. Freddie almost choked again. *That's Will-fucking-Graham!* She knew that man! She'd seen him at the FBI crime scenes and tried to get information. But the man always just walked away or said something sarcastic back. He was some kind of empath-freak that the FBI used for specially twisted cases; a kind of expert in serial killers psychology. She always felt uneasy around him, like he could read her mind.

This is gold! I've hit the jackpot! Freddie was bubbling with excitement. Oh, that princess Bedelia will definitely pay her for these pictures. Lost in her thought she didn't see the waiter coming to her table and interpose himself in front of her camera. When the man didn't move she lift her head to tell him to get away, but he was looking angrily at the camera now. "I am sorry but I will ask you to leave immediately. The privacy of our customers is to be respected. Please leave now without the fuss, or we will have to call the police." He didn't move but lifted up his arm to show the exit to Freddie. She wasn't to be treated like this by this lackey she thought, but then she remembered that she needed to be discrete here out her own interest. At least for now. "Nevermind, I was leaving anyway. I will not recommend your place because of service…" The waiter accompanied her to the door, and then from behind the corner she saw him speaking with a man that she supposed to be the manager. Freddie didn't care though, she'd managed to get the pictures she needed. Now, all she had to do was print these photos and send them to her generous customer. " *With the money, I might finally be able to get that Vuitton bag I've been eyeing,"* Freddie laughed as she got into her car.

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Hannibal was still in awe when he reached for Will's hand. His thinking shut down for a few milliseconds, not taking note of the few camera clicks that he heard in the back of his mind. Maybe there was an idiot taking pictures of their food, a nasty habit Hannibal hated but that seemed to be a trend now. Will was the only thing he could think of and wanted to do so in that moment. Hannibal was fascinated by the reflection of the candle flame in Will's eyes. How it contrasted with some darkness there in a blue azure sea. On the surface, Will was soft and shy but you have to have some darkness in you to choose to work for the FBI, Hannibal knew. But there was something else that he thought he had felt when they first made love. Even when Will lowered his control to enjoy their shared pleasure of the flesh, he never seemed vulnerable. On the contrary, then he appeared magnificent and poisonous like a beautiful and toxic Nerium Oleander, also known as the sweetly scented killer. Hannibal loved Will's scent, he found it most intoxicating indeed. He kissed Will's hand and breathed deeply, enjoying Will's spicy and sweet scent again... and his arousal as he deliciously blushed at his attention.

"I am so pleased that you accepted my invitation, Will. I hope you like French food. Ever since my years in Paris it stays one of my favorite." Hannibal was all smile devouring Will's blush with evident pleasure. Will sighed, "Yeah... French food is ok... I... I'm kinda used to it. I mean, I'm from Louisiana after all... but erm... it wasn't all fancy like this…" - "Ah, you grew up in the French Quarter then." Will laughed "Yeah, yeah I did... I could try to impress you with some French, but... I'm only used to Creole." He then looked away for a while. Hannibal wondered if Will was forcing himself to come here. He did not seem too happy. He tried to change subject to cheer him up. "I come to this place quite often. I can recommend my favorite dishes if you want, or do you want me to order for both of us?" Will answered without looking at him "Yes... please... it would be nice…"

"You seem troubled, Will," Hannibal watched his 'David' while they ate. Will looked up at Hannibal and then away, drinking his wine. "You know... that... that morning... I... I woke up and you were not there…" "I apologise, I was on call... Will, I didn't mean to leave you so abruptly." Will waved his hand "No... no it's not that... it's… There was a murder at the hotel... on the third floor…" Hannibal tried to act shocked. "Oh dear! How... how terrible!" Will then lowered his voice. "I can't talk about the investigation... but... but the thing is... I met the guy... WE met the guy... the dead guy." - "Oh, really... how so? Was he a speaker at the symposium?" Hannibal dabbed his mouth on the napkin and gave Will his full attention. Will was now fidgeting. "Remember... when we... when we took the lift up to my room? I mean before we entered the elevator… there was this... guy who called us 'faggots'... he's the one who died." Will fidgeted in his seat and then continued. "Hannibal, he was... It was the work of the Ripper. The guy's tongue was placed in an ashtray... and his heart was missing."

"Oh dear! I didn't give him much attention at the time... my eyes were busy elsewhere…" Hannibal teased him. "I can't say I am sorry for him... I am just sorry you had to work on that gruesome murder. You must admit that the world is better without bigots of his kind." Will

chuckled “Perhaps, yeah... but then… I wouldn’t want to end up like that, Hannibal... All cut up and displayed like a... pig!” Hannibal replied “Was it so ghastly? I’ve read about the Ripper and his kills, I cannot imagine what it was like for you to see it in real life.” Will then told Hannibal about the nightmares he had after every crime scene he visited. Hannibal frowned, advising him to maybe take a break and not follow Agent Crawford or the FBI to such gruesome scenes.

Will laughed again “That’s my job. I have to say that the Ripper is special... he is different... what he does is different... in his own way... he is a kind of artist... even if it could be horrible to hear that…. but I think it is also how he sees himself.” Hannibal’s heart beat faster as Will’s words reached his ears. Could Will really see him? Will thought the Ripper created art! Oh, his ‘David’ understood him so well. For a heart beat, Hannibal saw Will in his mind palace. He swallowed hard and took a profound breath. He felt good not to be alone there for once even if nothing was sure… “Hannibal? You ok?” Will’s hand on his startled Hannibal. “Yes... I…” Will cleared his throat “I’m sorry... sorry for talking about murder and weird stuff at dinner. Clearly you’re uncomfortable.” Hannibal laughed this time “Will, my dear Will... I’m a surgeon. Blood and gore are part of my daily work! I am curious to know why you are going on with this job of yours still, while it seems to take its toll on you?”

Will smiled. “I... I enjoy it. I... I don’t mean to sound like a psycho, but... I... I like solving puzzles and investigating crimes. The only reason I didn’t make it as an agent was because I didn’t pass the psych-eval.” Will blushed, ashamed that now Hannibal knows his failure at becoming a full-fledged agent. “You have nothing to be ashamed of, dearest. Just because you did not qualify for a field agent does not mean you are anything less than a good investigator.” Will felt relief wash over him. Hannibal accepted him, without judgement. So he was more than happy to talk more about his work. “When I am on the crime scene, all I have to do is close my eyes... and everything is rolling in my mind as if I was there when it happened. I don’t see it like a movie because I can feel it... I can feel the hate and the anger of the killer... the fear and desperation of the victim…”

“How does it feel to be in the head of the Ripper?..” Hannibal asked softly. “This is very strange... when I am on a Ripper’s scene... what I feel is completely different... no hate, no anger, no rush... mostly serenity, and a kind of achievement... It is difficult to describe, but yes, it is a very…” - “Do you not feel disgusted at what he does?” Will shook his head “I... I feel... like I was the one doing it… making this Art…” Hannibal found it hard to breathe, like there was something squeezing his lungs but his smile still widened. “And how does that feel, Will?” “I... I feel... powerful.” Hannibal had to stop himself from reaching over, to grab Will and kiss him. He could smell Will’s strong arousal now. It was intoxicating. Oh, how aroused he felt himself! “Will... after dinner... I…” Will chuckled, grabbed Hannibal’s wrist and said “If you want to just... get out of here and... I dunno... have wild sex, I’m ok with that!” They locked each other’s gaze and exchanged what words were not able to deliver.

After a shared silence, Hannibal told Will that he was more and more interested in the psychological side of his work with patients. Even as a surgeon, he realized that the psychological state was a good part of the recovery after the intervention, sometimes even before, to insure its success. He told him that he gave a serious thought of becoming a psychiatrist and was encouraged by his wife and colleagues; even passed some exams. Will thought that it was no surprise that Hannibal was so attuned with his feelings. He was naturally inclined to introspection and sensitive to other's states of mind. Yet, he kept an aura of secrecy around him. He could not exactly point out why he was feeling that way about Hannibal. It was as if part of him was locked behind closed doors. Will felt the suffering there, behind the charming persona that he saw among colleagues at the symposium, with a smile and a pleasant word for everyone. Will told himself that he will not be satisfied with that constructed and protective persona. In a predatory and protective momentum all at once, he wanted Hannibal naked and raw.

Supernova

As soon as they finished their meal, Hannibal was only too happy to call for the bill. When they were almost at the door, the manager called “Dr. Lecter, what a pleasure to see you here again. I hope you had a pleasant dinner?..” He walked towards Hannibal to shake hands and nodded towards Will with an lightly appreciative gaze. Will nodded back uncomfortable, and the two men exchanged a few words in hushed voice, before shaking hands again. Hannibal put his hand on Will’s small back to lead him to the exit and let him pass the door first. Will noticed right away the change in Hannibal’s mood. “Is there a problem?” he asked. “It’s nothing. Really nothing to concern you, Will. Guillaume is an old friend, and he gave me some perturbing news about a relation we have in common.” “Nothing bad I hope…” Will heard his superficial socialized varnish say automatically. “Nothing that cannot be fixed tomorrow” Hannibal said while he unlocked the doors of the Bentley.

When they were both seated, Hannibal reached for Will’s hand again and kissed it slowly looking straight at him with pure lust. “Tonight, my only concern is how long I can keep you moaning and writhing underneath me, Cheri... You are so beautiful then…” He bent and brushed his lips against Will’s. Will felt his heart beating faster in his chest and he parted his lips slightly as an invitation. Hannibal gave Will a slow and languorous kiss. His tongue slid along his, hot, wet and demanding. Will groaned and pulled on his coat to have him closer against himself, to feel warm and secure in his embrace. They got lost in each other for a long time like this until Hannibal felt his cock aching too painfully in this position and straightened back with regret.

Slightly panting, they exchanged a complicit look, and without a word, Hannibal started the car. Will felt unwilling to break physical contact and slipped his hand between Hannibal’s thighs and left it there while he was driving. At the sensation Hannibal turned to Will with a fond smile. The burning desire was so thick that it made it difficult for them to breath so they drove all the way in silence. By the time Hannibal reached his former Baltimore house, he was already painfully hard. He glanced at Will and noticed a sheen of sweat on Will’s forehead. Will was fidgeting as he was equally aroused. Hannibal couldn’t wait to have Will in his arms again, to have Will beneath him moaning and writhing with pleasure. Hannibal got out of the car quickly and Will followed him to the entrance of the mansion.

“This is… whoa!” Will looked around, noticing that Hannibal’s house not only stood on a fairly large property but was also the only house at the end of the road. All the other houses were business and company buildings, deserted at that late hour. “No neighbours to take care of your plants when you are away?” Hannibal chuckled as he opened the front door. “No... well, not for another couple of miles. I... I inherited this place from my uncle. He liked privacy, so this was perfect.” Will leaned into Hannibal “Yeah, perfect for us too. You sure

your wife's not home?" Hannibal walked into the house, tugging Will inside. Then he pinned Will to the closed door and kissed him. "Darling... let's not talk about my wife while I make love to you… Besides it's my bachelor house. She never comes here..." Will laughed and then moaned as Hannibal began to suck on his throat.

Hannibal then left Will suddenly and went to the living room, with an inviting smile saying "Come with me, I want to get us some drinks and start a fire for a romantic effect." Will smiled and trotted behind him. He felt special, wanted, loved. Will could hardly remember the last time he was in such a relationship. His past lovers were usually happy with just being physical. It was always what they wanted and Will was obliging to that. He was never comfortable talking about his own feelings or sharing himself with others. With Hannibal it was different. Hannibal wanted him, in spite of his faults, in spite of his unstable moods. Hannibal didn't see Will's empathy as a 'party-trick'. Will's thoughts were interrupted when a whiskey glass was placed in his hand.

"Here you are, Will…" Hannibal smiled at Will. Will sipped the whiskey and his eyes widened. "Wow! This... I…" Hannibal touched Will's glass with his own. "It's a Macallan, 18 years old. You did say you were fond of whiskey." Will's cheeks warmed. "I was just... rattling random stuff about myself, didn't think you were paying attention." Hannibal got up and went to the fireplace to light the fire. "How could I not pay attention to you, when you are constantly on my mind?" He looked over his shoulder at Will with fond adoration. He went busy for a few minutes while Will was staring at him, detailing his muscles as he moved. Hannibal was beautiful, graceful as a dancer with precise and harmonious movements. *No wonder he was so vigorous that night at the hotel,* Will thought to himself with a smile.

"Something amuses you..." Hannibal said, as he straightened and moved closer to Will. "You're... like a dancer... or even an agile cat…" Hannibal laughed this time "I did take dance lessons as a boy. Martial arts too. But of all my pastime pleasures, I enjoy cooking the most." Will placed his whiskey glass next to Hannibal's on the table. "You cook? Wow! Is there anything you cannot do? I mean... you're like this... perfect guy…" Hannibal put his arms around Will. "You, Will, are perfect." Hannibal brushed his lips against Will's while pushing him to lie on the couch "You are so perfect, Will, that I can't have enough of you... I thought of you constantly since we met. You are absolutely addictive…" he kissed him languorously, and Will answered by sliding his tongue through Hannibal's lips. They both began to unbutton each other's shirts feeling the urgent need for skin contact. Already moaning and panting, they sat up on the couch just in time to help each other out of their clothes.

Eventually, both of them ended up on the plush carpet by the fireplace. Hannibal gazed down at his 'David' - pale naked body, flushed red from being marked by his teeth. Will, breathing hard, gazed back "Well, what are you waiting for... Doctor? Are you going to examine your

patient?" Will's teasing earned him a light smack on his thigh. "Don't tease me, Will... or I'll be very… cruel to you…" Hannibal grinned. Will laughed in return "Oh, yeah!.. I want you to be as cruel as you like, Doctor Lecter…" The rest of Will's words were swallowed by Hannibal's mouth on his. Then his mouth went down, first a light brushing that made Will jolt and moan. He licked his nipples seriously and played there with his teeth before whispering in Will's ear "Tell me what you want, Will…" "Please, I... I want you to bite them..." Hannibal liked that. Pain was always arousing as a foreplay.

So he did as Will told him and bit his nipple slightly to test Will's pain-pleasure level. " Oh! Yes… please... again... I like that..." Hannibal was losing himself in pleasure and bit him again a little harder. Will groaned with half pain, half pleasure and jerked under Hannibal. "Hum... sorry... I went too hard…" - "No, no it was good…" Hannibal kissed him and his hands went on his nipples to calm the burn of the bite. Will was hard against him now and his hand was sliding between them to stroke their cocks together. Hannibal swallowed hard trying to control the fire in his lower belly as he didn't want to come yet. Will kept going like this, alternating slow easy strokes and tight almost painful ones that made Hannibal groan louder. The pre-come was just enough to enjoy the friction. "Will… oh, your hands… what they do to me!" Hannibal moaned louder as Will's hand gripped Hannibal harder.

Will spurred against Hannibal's ear "Please... I want you to come in my hand like this... let go for me... I know you like control... but I want you to let go... thrust harder in my hand and let go…" Hannibal was challenged to surrender himself to Will. On one hand, he wanted to surrender and suffer the ecstasy that was burning within and feel release, but on the other hand he wanted to be dominant, to be the one on top of their shared pleasure. Behind it all, he was also afraid of the ease that Will demonstrated in reading him and getting him where he wanted. Will felt all the conflicting scenarios that were playing in Hannibal's mind... but he had the joystick well in hand and was confident that this time Hannibal would play following his rules. So he played him a little longer and earned a symphony of moans where he also had his part... until they both came together. Hannibal whited out at the violence of his ejaculation.

Will laid back, then chuckled "Wow! I... I think I'm seeing stars now... are you?" Hannibal blinked and tried to control his rapid heartbeat. "I've... never experienced such intense pleasure... with anyone...before… before you, Will..." They stayed for a while in complicit silence, trying to catch up their breaths. Hannibal's arm around Will felt like reassurance for both of them. Will felt loved and grounded, Hannibal felt possessive and dominant again. Hannibal kissed the corner of Will's mouth and sat up, looking at his lover in the light of the fire. "My Ganymede… stay where you are!" Hannibal crawled up and stood. Will watched him with amusement as Hannibal began searching the drawers on the writing table. He saw Hannibal grab a drawing pad and some pencils. Then he sat down by Will again, and began to sketch.

Will's mind wandered while he indulged Hannibal with a pose. He thought about artist, and from there about the artistry of the Chesapeake Ripper. How it was so easy for him to admire his morbid pictures. Thinking aloud he said "Despite the horror, I can't stop myself from admiring the talent of the Chesapeake Ripper..." Hannibal froze, his pencil almost slipping from his fingers. "What do you mean, Will?" "Sorry... I was thinking aloud…" Hannibal started to breathe again. "You were speaking about the Chesapeake Ripper?.." "Yeah!... Sorry, my mind makes associations constantly… and not always with the most tasteful elements... hope I didn't ruin the mood…" Hannibal gave Will a small smile "Should I be jealous that you seem to pay more attention towards the Ripper rather than towards me?" Will laughed "Wha… No! Hannibal... come on! Besides, I don't think the Ripper would date me… eat me maybe…" Hannibal chuckled "I could understand that as you are a savory dish for any palate. I love how you taste." Hannibal finished his drawing and they spoke a little more. Then Hannibal took Will to his bed and despite they were both exhausted they made love again, slowly and with an infinite softness, and fell asleep totally spent.

When Will woke up, he realised he was alone. Deja vu, like in the hotel room. Except that the bed he lay on was huge, with blood red satin sheets. Sunlight filtered through the red laced curtains by the large windows. Will also felt the soft down pillows. *Hannibal's bedroom,* his mind began to stir now. He didn't want to move. He felt sore, but content. The door opened and Hannibal walked in with the promising scent of coffee. "Good morning, Cheri!" Hannibal sat on the side of the bed, put the mug on the night table and bent to kiss Will. "Did you sleep well?" Will's answer was to pull Hannibal closer and kiss him hard. Hannibal smiled. "I suppose that's a 'yes' then". Will kept his arms around Hannibal's neck. "You know, if this was part of room service at Hotel Lecter... I don't mind moving in."

Hannibal smiled brightly "I am afraid that I will have to hurry now. Too bad... I have a scheduled operation in less than an hour." Will sighed, then took the cup of coffee from the table. He drank it and moaned "Oh my god! What's in this cup?" "Darling, every home should have a functional French Press. It would save you from buying expensive rubbish from Starbucks." Will grinned "Yeah, Starbucks is not good enough for your posh tongue... but then, I love what your posh tongue did to me last night." "Come on down as soon as you are ready, I prepared a small breakfast." Will showered quickly and went downstairs to find Hannibal in the kitchen. He was dishing out eggs, sausages and toasts in two pricey white porcelain plates. "This smells amazing" Will said as he sat down to eat. Hannibal was watching him as he savored what he had so carefully prepared for him with the pig's heart who badmouthed them. He was happy to see the appreciation on Will's face, but still a little sad that he wasn't able to share everything with him. Even if he was surprised to hear last night's appreciation for his lethal art from Will's mouth, he knew that it was not possible. Maybe, one day…

Universal Games

"...And please don't come back!" "Tell your boss, you'll regret that! I am a journalist and there are laws to protect my work!" Freddie Lounds yelled from the door of the Cafe St-Germain. The most painful for her was to hear them laugh behind her back while she was going to her car on the parking lot. "Fucking lackeys, they know nothing, I'll teach them!" She sat in her car and laughed to herself: *Who cares! Tonight I fished a good one... And I played it good.* She realised that she could get good money for what she got on her memory card. Now, all she had to do was to print out the photos and pay a visit to the snobby princess.

When she arrived at her motel, Freddie laughed to herself again. Imagine the scandal - Baltimore's famous couple having marital problems! Oh, and Lecter the Prince is banging the FBI's bloodhound! Freddie showered and washed her hair. Then, wrapping a towel around herself she came out and powered up her laptop. She connected her camera to the laptop and began to upload the photos. While the photos were transferring she thought about Bedelia again and how she could be able to blackmail her. Then she thought about the divorce and how greedy she showed herself... *Does the princess already have another charming prince in view?.. Worth following her for a few hours…* Freddie heard the sound of the cashier drawer in her mind like in a cartoon…

Smiling to herself she clicked the 'print' button, and her HP Officejet began to churn out the scandalous photos in full colour. While the photos were printing, Freddie decided to do some digging. Now that she knew *who* Bedelia was, it was easy to look her up on the Internet. She soon found the Lecter's address and also Bedelia's office address. *Tomorrow I'll go to her office and see what I can dig up,* Freddie told herself, *Time to pretend to be a patient again and make an appointment.* She began to imagine Bedelia's face staring at the incriminating photos, and how she will cleverly mention extra payment for all the trouble. "I'm gonna be RICH!" Freddie screamed, doing a little dance around the room.

This was also her way of getting even with the FBI. Every time she tried to get a story, the agents would turn her down or chase her out. Once Agent Crawford had threatened to arrest her. Then there was that empath-freak Graham, who insulted her in front of the others at the last crime scene she went to. Now she wanted to pay Agent Graham a long due publicity. Freddie Lounds was going to have her revenge - the FBI bloodhound was having an affair with a married man of the high society! Hah! She knew blackmailing Graham wasn't possible; instead, she should just write up the story on Tattle Crime and let the whole world read it! And so she began to write with a witty smirk "FBI SPECIAL AGENT CAUGHT IN A SECRET ROMANTIC RENDEZVOUS WITH A MARRIED MAN OF BALTIMORE HIGH SOCIETY - TAKING A BREAK FROM CATCHING THE RIPPER?"

Freddie rubbed her hands with glee, laughing hard. Oh she couldn't wait to see the look on Graham's face when the next crime happens! He might scream at her, but it didn't matter. She would have already put his reputation on the line with the scandal. She took a cunning pleasure in writing an article dripping with malice. Then she posted it online right away with the most girly picture of Agent Graham she could find from her latest collection. One where his curly hair framed his angelic face… *Life's a bitch, agent Graham!* At that moment,

Freddie felt powerful with all the power of the press under her fingers. Once the article was up, Freddie put on a long t-shirt and went to bed... alone. Life's a bitch…

The next morning she hurriedly made her way to the clinic and put on a fake smile. *Time to play a patient.* She was about to pick the lock of Dr Du Maurier's office when she heard her coming out with one of her colleagues. She just had time to get in the service stair, leaving the door slightly open to hear what was said. Freddie peered out and her jaw dropped then. Dr Du Maurier was pinned to the door of her office and another man was kissing her neck while saying "...like to fuck you anyway I can, my dear." She had the smile of a kid on Christmas day. *Well,well, well… looks like Princess is having a fling herself! Oh this is GOLD! Let me get my camera!* Freddie opened her tote bag quickly and pulled out her camera. She took as many photos as she could, without being noticed.

Obviously it was not a good time to make an appointment, and she had to think her strategy over. But now, with all the photos she had, Freddie had another way of getting the money. She realised she could blackmail Bedelia instead. Then she could contact the charming prince to test how receptive he would be about some arguments for his part of the bargain in the future divorce he even didn't know he would be having *Freddie, that new handbag is YOURS!* Thinking of all the money she was going to make, Freddie kept clicking her camera until they got in the lift still glued to one another. Once the elevator door closed, Freddie walked out of the staircase door and decided to go back to her apartment. She had more photos to print and laugh over.

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Hannibal Lecter considered himself a rather patient man. He was also meticulous. He channelled all this through his surgeries and his cooking. He may have little regard for rude pigs, but he never showed an instant reaction. He would bide his time, slowly, and then strike. Like a snake eyeing its prey, sinking its venomous fangs into the unsuspecting victim. But this time, Hannibal found himself acting on an impulse. It was a couple of days after he made love to Will by the fireplace. He had just come out of surgery, all cleaned up, and was relaxing in his office when he opened the Tattle Crime website on his tablet. Guillaume told him about Freddie Lounds at the restaurant, suspecting she had taken pictures of him with his guest. That woman was so rude and had no respect for privacy. Hannibal only read her tabloid news to keep up with the Ripper investigation. He wanted to check if she published anything about the hotel murder in her rag.

The headline caught his eye first. Then the photo of Will's angelic face. Hannibal glared at the screen, his blood boiling. *How does she dare to ruin my Will's reputation like that?* A visit from the Ripper was in order. It was an inconvenience as he got a good part of his information about the FBI investigation from that hack, but this time she had gone too far. So after work he went to his bachelor house and took the tools of his trade. He then drove to the rueful motel Freddie called home. Seeing the faded paint work and mold, Hannibal shuddered. How could any human being live in such a place? But alas, Freddie Lounds was certainly not human, not to Hannibal at least.

He first checked if the piggy hack was home, and when he was certain that she wasn't, he picked the lock of her door. Freddie could be out around the town, looking for more gossips.

So Hannibal walked into the room and decided to hide in the shadow for the rude pig to return. He was happy to wear his plastic suit as the room was so dirty. As he walked past the table and the laptop, he stopped. There, next to the printer, were the photos from the restaurant. Every intimate moment, Hannibal and Will spent together at dinner, was displayed in colour. Then something else caught his eye. Lifting a faded brown envelope, Hannibal smirked. Under the envelope were photos of Bedelia and Chilton kissing against the door of her office. He suspected that Bedelia was having an affair with Chilton, since he often smelt Chilton's aftershave on her; but never cared enough to confront her.

Now there was evidence. However, he didn't want to catch the both of them. He would rather spend his time courting Will Graham. Hannibal saw a note with a transcript of a phone conversation, and understood it was with Bedelia and some more numbers he supposed to be what she expected to get from her spying job. If Bedelia had asked Freddie to spy on him perhaps she was up to something. *Oh Bedelia, human motivation can be little more than lucid greed,* he thought. Frowning at the restaurant pictures again, a picture began to form in his mind. After subduing the red-haired pig, perhaps he will snip off her fingers one by one - punishment for typing such vulgarity about his beautiful David.

Or, maybe he could play them all to get what he wanted. Yes, a much better outcome then: what would happen to Bedelia and the over-ambitious Frederick Chilton? Now Hannibal was more interested in finding out the result. Killing the red-haired pig didn't seem so important anymore. Check-mate Bedelia and her dirty game, getting an overdue reckoning on Chilton who didn't think better than to bang his wife (even if he didn't give a damn, she was his for the better and those days mostly the worst…), and get Will as a reward to plan it so well. He still had to think about what he wanted with Will, almost afraid to think about that even in the comfort of his mind palace. What was it that they had together? He felt that he wanted him in his life on the long term which meant that he had to get rid of Bedelia anyway, so divorce wasn't so bad... but on his own terms. With a feral smile he left Freddie's room, he could come back later anyway…

Meteor Radiance

At Quantico, Freddie Lounds article didn't go unnoticed. Will had just walked into the forensics lab when there was whistling and catcalling. "Way to go, Graham!" Jimmy Price tapped him on the shoulder while Brian Zeller laughed. Beverly was grinning too. "You really know how to pick 'em, Will. Seriously, when you told me he was a doctor I didn't know he was THIS HOT!" She said, holding up a tablet showing a Tattle Crime article. Will blinked several times trying to read the screen. He never bothered about Freddie Lounds' rubbish, but this time she had written something about him... and… "Shit! SHIT!", Will tugged at his curls, "Oh god! He's…" Beverly stopped laughing and placed the tablet back on the table. "Hey... Will? You ok?" Will shook his head, mumbled something and walked out of the lab.

When Will rushed past his office, Jack quickly called out, his voice very severe "Will, I think we have to talk for a moment." He pulled Will into the office before he could protest. Will had planned to hide in an empty lecture hall to phone Hannibal. He wanted to apologise for Lounds' stupid article and also because the article would ruin Hannibal's reputation if people learn who was **"the high society married man banging the sassy agent Graham"**. He was looking at his shoes in Jack's office, his throat very dry, but also angry at Jack who should think better than to mix in his private affairs as he already had a pretty good idea of what he was going to tell him. Jack sat at his desk and turned his screen to face Will.

The Tattle Crime article stared back at Will, and Will wanted to smash the screen. "What the hell is this?" Jack's loud voice echoed in the office. Will shoved his hands into his pockets. "I was on a date, Jack. Big deal. She's stalking me coz she's got nothing to gossip about…" Jack pointed to the picture on the screen. "Date? You date married men now, Will? What the hell were you thinking?" Will was very upset now behind the guilt and he yapped at Jack "Who I am dating is NONE of your business, Jack! You are overstepping personal boundaries!" Jack sneered. "Personal boundaries maybe, but not when the reputation of MY agent is on the line… I don't care who you date as long that doesn't imply scandal that draws my service and the FBI in the dirt of rag gossips!" Will looked away, wanting very much to scream or throw something. He didn't care about his reputation, but he was worried about Hannibal and how he would react. He didn't want to imagine the worst case scenario, but his mind was very eager to provide it anyway.

Will knew, deep down, that his relationship with Hannibal was not something permanent. Even if Will wanted it to be, Hannibal was still a married man. He had his own life. And if this stupid article had the potential to ruin that, Hannibal might just break up with him. Will had to prepare for that, though it would really break his heart. He tried to numb his feelings for Hannibal getting ready for the worst as he didn't want to get hurt again or too much... but he knew it was too late for that. He realized that he was in love. He was shaking a little while Jack was still yelling some bullshit about putting his affairs in order and not to shame the service. Jack saw it but interpreted it as maybe he went too far there, so he calmed down "Will, you are part of our family. What happens to you concerns us in a way, so please at least try to stay discrete." Will smiled sadly "Did you think it was my choice? Freddie Lounds wanted revenge for all the disdain the FBI rightfully showed her. Today it's me,

tomorrow could be any of you she bites." Will let out a sad laugh "You should have arrested her that time, Jack... at least to scare her a little so that she'd keep her distance." Jack rubbed his forehead "There wasn't anything I could charge her with. She would have made the FBI look like fools if we had her wrongfully arrested. Ok, we'll let it go for now and stay low. Just… be careful, Will."

Will just shrugged as he left Jack's office with a bitter taste in his mouth. He kept walking until he reached the parking lot. Taking a deep breath he pulled out his phone and called Hannibal. "Hi... Hannibal? I... can we... I need to see you..." Will stuttered. It was then that he realised his hands were still shaking after the meeting with Jack. "Did something happen Will? Are you alright?" Hannibal replied urgently on the other end. "I... I am very sorry... Hannibal, I need to talk to you... as soon as possible…" - "You sound very upset, Will... We can meet at a coffee shop nearby the hospital at 3pm if you want, I have an hour free before the next patient." - "Yes, give me the address I'll... I'll be there..." Will then memorised the address of the coffee shop Hannibal mentioned over the phone.

He got into his car and drove towards the place, his heart pounding in his ribcage. He still felt like destroying something. *Where is all this rage coming from?* he wondered. He never really hated anyone, but Will knew now that he really despised Freddie Lounds. His mind served him various scenarios where he saw himself exercising a sweet reckoning on the redhead. Each one more bloody than the last. It was horrific, but at least a satisfying way to get out some of the steam out in the absence of better. ***What am I doing? Why am I thinking about killing someone? Why... why do I like it?*** Will felt a chill up his spine but he liked it.

Will parked his car and got out. He all but marched towards the shop and walked in, eyes searching for Hannibal. Will found his lover seated in the corner. Hannibal looked at him with a fond smile. He got up and came to him so they could order their coffees. Hannibal himself was feeling a little hungry after the last surgery he performed. Seeing how Will was in distress he spontaneously put his arm around his waist and held him close for few minutes. "Will... what happened to you?.. Tell me…" - "Hannibal... I am so sorry... Let's order and we can talk after…" Hannibal was curious, did Will change his mind about their relationship? Did Will realise this affair was going nowhere and decided to break? He wasn't sure that he could allow that. That thought anchored heavy in his stomach and made him feel a strange tightness in his chest. "Will, talk to me... please." Hannibal held Will's left hand in his. His lover's hand was shaking, just like his right hand.

Will waved it and took some distance from him. "Please, Hannibal... Let's sit first and I'll tell you all about it…" Seeing the worried look on Hannibal's face, he added "It is nothing about our relationship…" Hannibal sighed in relief. Behind the counter, one of the barista was watching them with interest and a little smile. He noticed that the curly-haired man was rather sexy. The barista stopped wiping the counter. "Hi, gentlemen, welcome to Cafe Poupon. Today's special is the Rainbow Chai..." Hannibal ordered a french coffee with soy milk. Then the barista turned to Will and grinned. "And you, sexy?", he said, winking at Will. Hannibal felt a burning sensation within, as if he would combust instantaneously. Will smiled shyly and ordered a black americano, unaware of the raging battle in Hannibal's skull. The barista took Will's blush as an invitation to flirt more. While he was busy preparing their order he went on "What's making a nice guy like you so sad? If you were my date, I'd make sure you're never sad. And I'd bring out that lovely smile of yours every chance I get."

Will burst into laughter. He's never had a random guy flirting with him like that so openly. Being his usual self, Will always avoided eye-contact and tried not to get into conversations with strangers. Now here was this barista outright flirting with him... right in front of his boyfriend... no, lover. He didn't have time to wonder more about this funny circumstance as a possessive arm came around his waist again. Hannibal pushed him lightly towards the table in the corner. "I'll get our coffees. Have a seat Will, take a deep breath and relax. Then you can tell me everything." Will didn't see the terrible and feral look that Hannibal threw toward the barista. Neither did he before it was too late... Hannibal, always a gentleman, paid for the coffees and took them to the table. He sat with a worried frown and listened attentively as Will told him about the article and Jack's scolding.

Hannibal was concerned, and also angry that his beloved was going through such turmoil. At the same time, he realised that pig of a barista was watching them from the counter. When his lover finished, Hannibal held Will's hand over the table. He rubbed Will's knuckles tenderly. Will seemed to relax at that gesture. "I... I'll understand if this is too much for you, Hannibal. I know you're… you're a private man... and... and you wouldn't want this scandal to ruin your reputation... so I... it's ok if you... if you want to end this..." Will's words were halted when Hannibal placed a finger to his lips. "Will. This article means nothing to me. No, let me finish. You are important. I want this... I want what we have to continue. I've never felt so complete."

Will looked in Hannibal's eyes and saw he meant every word. "You're sure?" He told himself *sometimes home is a person.* It was frightening and delicious... but right now mostly frightening. "I feel the same, Hannibal... it's so frightening!.." - "Don't overthink this incident. We will deal with everything in due time. Let me make this up to you… come to my house tonight and I'll cook you dinner." Will chuckled. "Wow! Dinner, huh? I…" Hannibal squeezed Will's hand. "Yes, please accept… I've… " Hannibal sighed, then continued "I must confess something, Will. I've never stopped thinking about you from that day at the hotel. At night I long to have you beside me, but I have to be content with just the memory of your moans and sighs." Will opened his mouth to say something, then closed it, then opened again. "You... you *want* me? I... but…" "Yes, dearest. I want you, every part of you." Will looked down at his coffee cup, then looked up at Hannibal. "Well, how can I say no to that? You're such a charmer!" He was now smiling with renewed light in his eyes.

"I take that as a yes then. I will have to go soon, but, Will, I need to know you feel better and rest assured that nothing can make me stay away from you." Will smiled even brighter towards him "Yes... I... feel better now... I... needed to hear you say that. You always know how to make me feel better somehow…" Hannibal got up and waited for Will to exit with him not wanting that pig barista to hit on his David as soon as he left. Just outside the cafe, Hannibal kissed Will on his lips. It was a chaste kiss but he wanted that pig to see that Will belonged to him. Will blushed a little as he kissed back. Hannibal then walked Will to his car and watched him drive off. As he walked back towards the hospital, Hannibal formed a plan to get rid of that pig. **How does that swine dare to flirt with my David in front of me!** He knew it was a sacrifice to make as his coffee was the best in the area…

Satellite Interference

Bedelia put on the final touch to her face. Chilton would be here any moment. Hannibal texted her about an urgent last minute surgery and said he won't come home tonight. She now had a good excuse to plan something with Chilton. They were set for a concert and dinner. * *Perhaps more after that,* * Bedelia thought to herself. How wonderful that Hannibal was not going to be home. Maybe she could show Chilton the new negligee she bought. Bedelia's phone beeped. Another message from Freddie Lounds. Oh, bother that bitch! Why does she need more money? They had already agreed on the payment, but now this tabloid-journalist wanted more. Bedelia argued with Freddie earlier and then kept ignoring her phone calls. She was trying to be patient but there was no way that she would give in to that bitch. She knew that laymen people have to be kept on a leash and where they belonged. She could call as much as she wanted, but if she ever wanted to see any money she would have to play by Bedelia's rules.

She finished getting ready, grabbed her purse and walked down the stairs. Someone knocked on the door. Thinking Chilton had arrived, Bedelia opened it only to come face to face with the red-haired bitch wearing a slinky top, short skirt and boots. She was branding a fist of pictures with a smirk on her face. "You can ignore me all you want, Princess... but if I go to your husband with your dirty secrets…" Bedelia was furious. She almost slapped Freddie, but Freddie dodged. "Shut up! How dare you! Do you know who I am?" Freddie laughed. "I know ALL about you... and your little fuck-sessions with Dr Chilton." Bedelia felt her blood freeze. She had been so careful about the affair. How did that hack found out? Freddie saw Bedelia's shocked look and smiled. "Oh yeah… I got pictures of that too… in full colour." Bedelia noticed the glossy prints Freddie was displaying and the two envelopes in her hand. The photos clearly showed her pinned against her office door while Chilton was kissing her. She stopped, calmed down, closed her eyes and breathed deeply.

She thought about how to assert her dominance again, blackmail left her few space to maneuver. * *Should she kill that bitch to get rid of her?* * The idea wasn't unpleasant, but she was only dreaming. "I don't like blackmail, Miss Lounds." "Don't get on your high horse again, it is only an exchange between civilized people. I got what you wanted... and you have a lot of what I want…" - "Money?" - " Yes, precisely… May I come in, or do you want your neighbors to have an idea of our business transactions?" Bedelia let her in and closed the door behind her. * *To kill her now could be the best solution,* * she thought but she knew she wouldn't dare even if it was very tempting. Freddie Lounds turned to her, bending her head on the side with witty smile "We can help each other... here are the pictures you wanted…" and she handed her the photos that she waved to her earlier. Automatically Bedelia took them and looked at them in the bright light of the entrance hall.

Hannibal was seated at the Cafe St Germain... holding the hand of a young Adonis... kissing his hand while looking at him... Bedelia burst out laughing. While ordinarily so composed and cool, her majestic appearance gave way to a vision of the frightening mad witch. Freddie was a little taken aback. She was no longer a child frightened by fairy tales... but madness was not foreign to her. Always unpredictable and dangerous. She knew Bedelia was someone she would have to be cautious around. Yet, all Freddie could think about was the money she wanted. “What’s so funny? You think the pictures are fake? They’re real, honey… ask the staff. Apparently, your Charming Prince reserved a table for himself and his toy-boy.” Bedelia glared at Freddie. “I don’t care who he’s having an affair with. What I want to know is, have you told my husband about the other set of photos?” Freddie giggled. “Nope... but, let’s just say that if I find you’re not paying me what is due... I’ll send him a letter…”

Bedelia felt cornered, and she hated it. No one gets the better of her, especially not this hag from a tabloid trash website. “How much? What do you want to keep the other pictures away from my husband?” Freddie pretended to think. “Well... you did tell me you’d pay me by the hour... how about we add a little extra to that amount? Say… $150 by the hour, and additional bonus of $10,000 for the pictures of you and your lover-boy.” Bedelia cringed. All the money she was hoping to get from her divorce would worth it, but then if she didn’t pay she might end up with a ruined reputation. “Fine!” Bedelia all but shouted back at Freddie. “You’ll get the money in installments. I cannot hand it all to you, or my accountants might be suspicious.” Freddie laughed. “Oh sure... whatever. As long as I get the money. Oh, and just so you don’t rip me off? I’ll keep your secret pictures until the last payment is made!” Bedelia then proceeded to chase Freddie off just as she saw Chilton’s car arrive in the driveway.

Frederick got out and walked up to the front door, glancing at a familiar red-haired vamp running off. “Was that Freddie Lounds?” At the sound of her name, Freddie turned around to face Chilton. “Well, hello there... Dr Chilton!” Frederick beamed. He liked being recognised, simply because he thrived on attention. “What brings you here, Ms. Lounds?” “Oh, just business... your lover-girl is quite a negotiator.” Frederick blinked, confused “What... what business are you talking about? What’s going on?” Freddie giggled again “You know, with all that money and power, you people still behave like horny teenagers, rutting around…” Frederick instantly countered. “...but of course it is always more glamorous in silk sheets, Lounds!” His next thoughts were interrupted when he felt himself being tugged back.

Bedelia pulled Chilton inside before he further embarrassed the both of them. She slammed the front door and peered out the peephole to make sure Freddie had left the premise. Then she glared at Frederick. “Now listen to me. We need to be extra careful. That hag found out about us!” Frederick paled. “Shit! Does… does Hannibal know?” “Of course not! I had to agree to pay that fool so that she’d shut up about it. She wanted to send pictures to Hannibal.” Frederick looked like he was about to faint “I need a drink.” “Help yourself. You know where Hannibal keeps his liquor.” He poured them both a glass of whiskey and held one to her.

“How bad is it, Bedelia? You know I want that position at the BSHCI. I can’t afford a scandal…” Bedelia, recovered now from Freddie Lounds’ surprise, answered cooly “Nothing we can’t handle, Frederick... now be a good boy and let me taste the whiskey in your mouth…” Frederick quickly put down his glass and kissed Bedelia. They continued kissing for reassurance for a little while.

After ego recovery they departed for a high society evening. People like them could play with rats like Freddie Lounds even if she was particularly annoying for a rat. Later that night, Chilton was particularly excited to fuck Bedelia in Hannibal’s bed. He always liked to play with fire. He was also enjoying the expensive linen Hannibal bought for the bedroom. “Where does Hannibal get these sheets from?” Bedelia rolled her eyes as she moved closer to Frederick. “Who cares? He orders them online... some place in Europe. He has this fetish for European goods, as if no where else in the world people could make things…” Frederick laughed as he ran his fingers through Bedelia’s golden hair before tugging hard. Bedelia hissed, smiling at Frederick. She loved it rough and he gave her what she liked.

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When he arrived at the office before Bedelia that morning, Frederick Chilton was particularly proud of himself. He greeted the young receptionist with a charming smile. Last night with Bedelia was still fresh in his mind. He felt good to beat Hannibal for once. The Lithuanian was always the top of the class, it was annoying... For once Frederick felt like he gave him a sweet revenge and sleeping with Bedelia was not the worst thing that could happen to a man. Bedelia was parking her car in front of her office in her assigned spot. Her mind wandered about last night’s events. She was also curious to know who Hannibal's lover was. She'd never seen him before. He didn't seem like the type of person who moved within Baltimore's elite circle. She began to wonder how her husband could meet such an ordinary man. She entered her office as the phone was ringing.

Chilton glanced at his watch. His next patient, Will Graham should already be in the waiting room. He spoke about him last night when Bedelia was particularly... receptive. He had suggested the idea to Bedelia that she let him know about his progress so that he could write his book. And between two loud moans she agreed. Frederick had to admit, Graham was an interesting case study, one that would not only make his book a best-seller, but would also increase his respect among the other psychiatrists. Frederick picked up his phone to intercom Bedelia. “Just checking if you have arrived yet, my Love... Can we met now at the waiting room so I can introduce you to that patient I told you about, Will Graham.”

So they met in front of the waiting room with complicit smiles as they didn’t dare to kiss in front of the receptionist. Chilton opened the door. “Good morning, Mr. Graham!” He held the door for Bedelia as an invitation to follow him inside. Graham was walking in circles and

seemed particularly agitated. It was lovely to see that and he shared a telling look with Bedelia. “Good morning, Doctor Chilton.” Graham mumbled then sat down in a huff. He began to fidget as Frederick turned to Graham and said, “So... Will… as I told you before, I am giving you a referral. Don’t worry, Doctor Du Maurier is a dear colleague of mine and a very capable therapist…” Graham looked away, obviously not interested. “Whatever, Doc… your call…”

Chilton turned to Bedelia “Come in, my dear... Please meet Will Graham…” As if the universe were laughing at her, to her surprise and horror, sitting there in the waiting room was none other than the scruffy curly-haired usurper! Suddenly Bedelia felt very angry “You!” The almost scream made Will’s head turn towards her “Er... good… good morning, Dr Du Maurier... I... I was told to... to…” He fidgeted nervously.

Bedelia took one glance at him and was about to tell him to leave. She glared furiously at Frederick. “Frederick? What's going on?” Frederick was shocked. “But… we… I…” - “No!” She yelled. Chilton, confused, looked at Bedelia with wide eyes “Ah... well... this is Will Graham, a former patient of mine... I... find myself unable to continue his therapy. So I gave him a referral…” Bedelia stared at Frederick, then at Will Graham. Then she cursed silently “I cannot treat him, Frederick... he's sleeping with my husband!” She looked at Will with hellish fire. “Yes... I know about you and Hannibal!” Will stood up, jaw dropped “You're... but... but Hanni... he never mentioned your name…” Bedelia scoffed. “Of COURSE he wouldn’t tell his MISTRESS about his wife!” She left without another word. Chilton and Graham looked baffled at each other for a few seconds, and then Will rushed out of the office without even saying goodbye.

Sun Moon Revolution

The whole confrontation with Hannibal's lover left Bedelia in a bad mood for the rest of the day. What Hannibal saw in that usurper, she didn't know. He was scruffy, wore a wrinkled jacket, had traces of dog hair on the cuffs of his pants. *Ugh! How did Hannibal meet such a low-life?* By the time she went home, her mood soured further and she began to drink heavily. She heard the sound of car engine enter the driveway. Bedelia stood up and seeing Hannibal's Bentley on the porch, she rolled her eyes and grunted. The minute Hannibal entered the lounge, Bedelia snapped at him "I met your whore this morning!" She lashed out, narrowing her eyes at him. Hannibal stopped moving, turned to her and sneered. "Watch your tongue, Bedelia. Do not ever speak ill of Will Graham in my presence." She jerked, she never heard him speak to her like that. Before she could say anything more, Hannibal casually poured himself a glass of wine and continued "If I were you, I'd be very careful about bedroom secrets, considering YOU have been quite nicely whoring yourself out with Frederick Chilton." Hannibal smirked when he saw the shocked look on Bedelia's face. "Did you really think I wouldn't find out? I observed quite a number of things, Bedelia, my dear… from the constant stench of Chilton's cologne on you lately, and the dark hair left on the pillows probably after your rutting!"

Bedelia almost dropped her glass. She glared at her husband. The nerve of him to confess his affair to her face, without shame, without guilt, without remorse. Did their marriage mean nothing? Did the last five years hold no regard? Hannibal sipped his wine and turned towards her again "I didn't mind as there is nothing left between us, but in our bed…" Now Bedelia was troubled. She easily pushed away the common shame implied by such enunciate, seeing Hannibal's play here and the threat in regard of their divorce settlement. "What do you want Hannibal?" Hannibal had her where he wanted. "A divorce. Mutual agreement of course. I don't want your money, and neither will you get mine. We are both financially independent... and I doubt you will let Chilton enjoy his bachelor freedom much longer…" Bedelia laughed hysterically "You know me too well, Hannibal. That is why our marriage was a mistake from the start." Hannibal didn't want to enter any sentimental blackmail, so he just told her that his lawyer will contact hers as soon as she sends the details to him, and left without another word. Bedelia finished the whiskey bottle and stumbled into her bed, cursing Hannibal and men in general. Her last thoughts before she dozed off was of Frederick fucking her. Chilton will soon pay for them all…

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When Will left Chilton's office he just drove off out of Baltimore without any intended direction. Just to find some peace out of the city, out of the crowd. He stopped abruptly in the middle of nowhere and pulled up at the side of the road. Breathing heavily, he took out his phone and called Beverly Katz. "Hey, Will!" "Hi... I… I need to... to talk to someone... who's not Hannibal… or for that matter, his wife..." Beverly's voice softened. "Hey, you ok? I was on the way to your place anyway. Want me to come over?" Will sighed "Yeah... yeah, sure… but for now can we just talk?... I don't even know where I am…" Beverly got on full attention mode on the other end of the line "Will, tell me what happened?" Will swallowed "I... Bev… I met his wife." Beverly swore "Shit! This is bad… ok, what... how did it

happen?" "You won't believe it... She was my referral psychiatrist that Chilton suggested! For god's sake… as if this situation wasn't already fucked up!" Beverly tried to calm him down. "I hope you're not driving, Will. You're not…" "If you say I'm not stable, I'm hanging up!" "Hey! Calm down! You know I'd never say that to you!" Will sighed again "Sorry... I just… I don't know what to do!" Will tugged at his curls in frustration. He was breathing heavily, and trying not to break his phone in his palm.

Beverly was well aware of Will's strength and fragility, his mind. Right now, she felt him lost in his mind. He needed to get him out and feel grounded again. *First, leave your mind palace, Will,* she thought. "Will, tell me how did you feel when you met her? Was she mean to you?" - "Well... a pure stereotype... of princess bride fury…" he chuckled, " I cannot say I didn't deserve it as I knew Hannibal was married from the start. She called me 'the mistress of her husband'... maybe it would have been better… not mixing with my therapy…" Beverly snorted "That's for sure... but in any case you knew it could happen eventually. I blame Hannibal here, because he is the one at the center of all that conflicting situation... Will... is it serious for him? For you?" "Are you asking me... if I am in love with him?" "Yes, maybe…" Will sighed heavily "The sad part is... I think so... I didn't want to... I didn't want to let someone break my heart again... Bev…?" "Right here, Will. You can't choose with whom you fall in love with... but I still think that it's the best thing that happened to you in awhile. You're smiling more, you're even calmer now. I think Hannibal is good for you, Graham." Beverly laughed, making Will smile. "Really? You think so?" Beverly laughed again "Will... yeah! He kind of... brings out the best in you. He's also kind of a jerk for cheating on his wife... but... I dunno... he's good for you."

There was silence on Will's end and Beverly grew concerned. Her voice was a little louder now, but not to the point of shouting "Will... listen to me very carefully. Take a few deep breaths, ok? Now, where are you?" Will did as she told him, then he got out of his car and looked around. "There's... a signboard..." "What does it say?" Will read it out to her. "Ok, good… you're doing ok, Will. Now, when you're ready... you start driving back home, ok? I'll be there waiting for you. You're gonna be ok, Will. I have faith in you." Will blinked. He felt like crying, not because he was sad, but because he was so frustrated with everything that's happened. Jack hounding him to find the Ripper, Chilton trying to dig his brain for a stupid book, Hannibal's wife, Hannibal himself.

Will closed his eyes and thought about the river behind his house, where he fished from time to time. "Will? You still there?" Will opened his eyes again. "Yeah... yeah I… Bev? Should I… do you think I should just call it off with Hannibal? I mean... this whole thing is so fucking screwed up…" Beverly answered him "Hey, let's talk about this later, ok? You're in no shape to make decisions now. Just... just calm down and come home, Will. I'll be waiting for you." Will hung up and stayed out a long time, leaning against the car in the middle of nowhere doing nothing, not even really thinking. Just being still and appreciating the pain, but he also felt alive while he felt nothing in a zombie state for years before... before Hannibal.

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When Will's car drove in the dirt road to his house, Beverly's car was already parked there and his dogs were running free on the field in front. She walked among them and waved him

when she saw his car. Will felt better now, calmer and resolute. The familiarity and welcoming of this scene achieved to ground him in reality... whatever that means. He got out of his car and Beverly brandished a pack of beer she had left on the porch with a big smile. “Thought it could be the best remedy!” He smiled back “Do you intend to get me drunk?..” “That’s the idea... I think we could both enjoy some company and relaxing time with your dogs…” “You know you are always welcome, Beverly, you don’t need me to fall apart to have a beer with me…” “I don’t see you falling apart, Will. We all need to let the steam out from time to time... you are no different, that’s it. Just have to accept it, big brain!..” He openly laughed at that. They talked for a while about everything, the dogs, Brian and Jimmy’s complicated courtship, making fun of Jack’s bear attitude, etc. After a few beers, they were both more relaxed and it felt good. Everything felt just right. Will was seating on the couch and Beverly was laying there with her head on Will’s lap. The sun was going down and the field took golden traits.

Will closed his eyes and gently stroke Bev’s hair. He remembered the feeling of Hannibal’s hand stroking his hair, brushing his lips and swallowed hard. “Bev... what do you think I should do?.. I mean... with Hannibal?” Beverly physically felt him tense again. She stayed silent for a few minutes and thought with benevolence about her answer. Extreme affective sensitivity is always a prerequisite to great intelligence, it came with the territory, she thought. It’s not like if you had the choice. You could try to numb it to suffer less, but the price was always high...“For once in your life, Will Graham, don’t shy away from your feelings. Don’t numb yourself on some vague promise of peace and easiness. Life will never give you that, and more so because... you are who you are... You want Hannibal, yes or no?..” Will stayed silent for a few seconds, hardly breathing and bursted “Yes... oh god, yes!.. But... but it hurts so much, Bev!..” “Welcome to the world of the living and the suffering! Must be nice and peaceful in the ivory tower of your mind, but I would not exchange that for the feeling of being in love and alive. You are so lucky right now.” Will wasn’t sure he felt ‘so lucky right now’, but he got the point and knew she told him what he needed to hear outside of the enraged labyrinth of his brain.

Staring at the Sun's Shadow

When Hannibal left Bedelia, he drove directly to park behind the Cafe Poupon. He still had fifteen minutes before it closed. Time to get his tools from the special compartment in the Bentley's trunk and to don his plastic suit. Then he waited. On a Friday evening, few people were still wandering this business area, and even fewer were stupid enough to take a dark alley while the Ripper was still on the loose. Hannibal was thinking of the beautiful painting he would soon leave for Will hoping to drag him closer to his heart. He considered all possible ways Will could react and their odds. Already quite aware that it was difficult to predict his lover's reaction and even more so his consequent decision. Since the death of Misha and of their unconditional love for each other, Hannibal's life was a dark tunnel. He even forgot what it was to bathe in the light of their shared soul, one breath shared in two bodies, until he was caught in the vision of his beautiful David and felt him there. If it wasn't possible to keep him for now, at least he wanted to feel him there as often as possible. *All in good time…* he thought to himself.

The pig barista was just in time as he was carrying two big trash bags to the dumpster. Hannibal got out of the car with an engaging smile "Good evening! Do you remember me?" The guy looked at him suspiciously, dark alley was not a place to meet people. The guy should have been a doctor or something from the Hopkins hospital as he was still wearing a protective plastic suit of some sort. Then a kinky smirk brightened his vulgar face "Yeah... You are the old guy who came with the sexy brunet the other day…" Keeping the inside rage in check, Hannibal offered him a complicit smile "Yes, precisely. He sent me because he thought he had left his gloves in the bathroom the other day…" "Don't know if anything was found in the bathroom, but I could check for him" the barista answered and he turned to push the door. Without delay, Hannibal followed him inside. When they emerged from the kitchen behind the counter, the guy turned towards Hannibal "The lost items are in a box under the counter… but now that I think of it, I don't remember him going to the…" It was already too late as Hannibal was expertly squeezing his throat and the life out of him.

Hannibal felt very calm while driving the Bentley to his bachelor house. He had a fond smile thinking of Will. Things were going his way on one side. He freed himself to be with Will. On the other side, he wanted Will to not only be part of his life, but he wanted him to see him. He wanted to share with him on all levels. He knew it was a risky path, more so because Will was a FBI agent. But Will also became a FBI agent because of his nature, of which he had glimpses from time to time. The beautiful dark side of Will was there undoubtedly, and he felt privileged to be able to admire it. If only Will could see it and appreciate it like Hannibal. Instead, he was repulsed by it and only reluctantly used it to put himself on track of gruesome killers. Parking in the big garage, Hannibal thought of the date they will have tomorrow, of which agent Graham still doesn't know anything yet. Will Will appreciate the not so subtle white stones that Hannibal left him in the forest? Surely he will, and Hannibal felt a burst of love while he retrieved the cooler from the trunk. Mushrooms and spinach stuffed heart should be a pleasant dish for his lover, or maybe a mediterranean stew with tzatziki... Hannibal was still thinking about recipes when he peacefully fell asleep in his bed later.

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Will blinked awake and heard a muffled conversation in the background. He rolled over wanting to go back to sleep when something wet touched his arm. Ellie was licking him, wanting to be let out. The muffled conversation grew louder and ended abruptly. Will slowly sat on his mattress on the floor and saw Beverly pacing. “Hey! Your phone’s going to go off soon... Jack wants us now. Some guy at a cafe got murdered.” Will stretched and yawned “What time is it?” Beverly sighed “It’s not even 7.30 yet... You know how Jack is…” She started picking up the empty beer bottles. Will finally got off the floor and let his dogs out. He glanced back at the living room, remembering last night. His talk with Beverly calmed him down a bit. He was still apprehensive about the situation with Hannibal. But somehow he did decide he wanted him.

For once in his life, he was sure. He knew he was already in love with Hannibal, even if it had only been a few weeks. When Jack phoned him, Will had already finished his shower and Beverly helped him to feed the dogs. He was about to grab his car keys when Beverly pulled him away “I’ll drive, you can have a little nap in the car.” - “I can drive there without falling asleep, Bev. Come on!” Beverly sighed. “Ok, ok… fine... But I’ll be right behind you.” Will chuckled as he picked up his car keys. Beverly could be a little over-protective sometimes, but he liked her anyway. She was a really good friend.

When they arrived, a few police cars were already diverting the traffic and the crowd was kept at bay - few white collars on their way to work, some nurses used to have their morning break at the cafe Poupon with worried faces, and weirdos as usual. Among them, Freddie Lounds with her flamboyant hair was difficult to ignore. Will did his best, and Beverly took his arm to gently drag him inside. “I know you hate that bitch, but ignore her Will… She’s just waiting to see you angry so she could have something to write about.” - “Yeah, I know…” The science team was already at work and they glimpsed at Jack who was bending over a strange industrial machine. Price looked up from his tablet “So... You and Bev, huh?” he winked and laughed. Beverly smacked Price’s arm “Get your head out of the gutter, Jimmy! Besides, I’m not Will’s type.” Will rolled his eyes at the teasing “Laugh all you want, guys. At least I’m getting laid.” Zeller choked on his saliva “Whoa! Graham’s got bite!” The rest of the joke was interrupted by Jack’s loud voice “You guys are NOT being paid to do stand-up! Graham, get in here... The rest of you, clear out!”

Will walked towards the coffee machine and froze. *The barista who flirted with me! What the fuck?* He felt a chill down his spine. He never knew any of the other victims, except the guy at the hotel and now the barista. Was the Ripper someone he knew? Pushing all those thoughts aside, Will closed his eyes and let the pendulum swing.

I know you, and you know me. But we’re not friends. I... maybe I’m a customer. You recognise me, and so you let me in through the back... into the small kitchen. I... I strangle you while you’re distracted. I take pleasure in squeezing the life out of you. You are not strong enough to fight back. I drag your body towards the coffee machine. I begin my art: I make the surgical cuts…

Will’s thoughts came to a halt. The Ripper always made surgical cuts. He KNEW how to take the organs out without damaging them. He was skilled with the knife and other surgical

instruments. The Ripper had a medical background! Sweat trickled down Will's forehead. Even his shirt felt damp now. He tried to focus once again and looked back at the victim.

...I take out your liver, your kidneys… your heart. You were rude to me, so I took your tongue too. I take out your eyes, you looked at me wrong, you saw what you should not have seen…

"He flirted with me… Oh god!" Will staggered. Beverly rushed up to hold him before he fell over "Will? Hey… breathe, ok... nice and slow... I've got you…" When his breathing began to even out, he turned to Beverly "I'm alright. Let me... let me finish this." Beverly watched him warily. "I'll be right here, Will. Don't strain yourself." Will nodded and went back inside.

...your tongue wronged me, as did your eyes. So you don't need them. They will be discarded, perhaps I should make them into something worthy. You are a barista, you should have kept to your job instead of poking your nose where it did not belong. I will make an example out of you, so that others will know not to interfere with matters not concerning them. I elevate you, you unworthy pig, I shall turn you into art…

The artistic swirls of the foam in the coffee cup flashed in Will's mind "The coffee machine!" Beverly snapped on her gloves and motioned the forensic team towards the roasting machine. "No! The coffee machine on the counter... He made himself a coffee with the beans he roasted with the barista... His eyes must be in there too…" Then Will stepped back, allowing the others to gather the evidence. He felt sick. Not just because of the display, but the thought that the Ripper was somehow watching him. *Is he obsessed with me? Is he stalking me... Maybe watching me right now?* Will stood in the corner, trying hard not to throw up or faint. He was breathing with difficulty while he closed his eyes, trying to recenter here and now. When he opened them again, Jack was looking at him with concern. "Where are you, Will?" He gave him a faint smile "I'm here, Jack... difficult to stomach that the Ripper watched the guy as he was roasting, and casually picked up some beans after that to make himself a cup of coffee... That level of control is unseen even among serial killers…"

Jack sighed slowly "Yeah, and that son of a bitch chose Baltimore and its area as his playground!" Jack looked around the cafe again, then turned to Will "Any theory? I need something, Will. We need to catch this bastard." Will looked at his shoes "I... I think... he may be stalking me after that last article by Freddie Lounds... I got myself too much publicity…" Jack's eyebrows shot up "What? You sure? If he's stalking you, you're gonna need round-the-clock protection, Will!" Will shook his head instantly "No! I mean... I think he is... I'm not sure... I mean it could be anything. Maybe he's just... taunting me…" - "Okay, let me know if you notice anyone following you around, or even hanging around the places you visit. Don't think too much about coincidence, we need to stay careful. I don't want YOU to be the next Ripper-art!" Will took off his glasses and passed his hand over his eyes, suddenly feeling very tired and paranoid. "Get out of here, Will. I'll see you later at the lab", Jack told him.

He didn't need to be told twice. He would have run out of this nice coffee shop now turned into a crime scene. He recalled some of his good memories with Hannibal, how they were seated there next to the window... "Hey, Graham!" Her voice made him stop a few feet from

his car. He didn't want to turn around, but he had to. "What do you want? Haven't you had enough fun ruining my reputation? Is this some kind of joke to you, Lounds?" Will said angrily, his fists clenched. "Shouldn't expose yourself with your MARRIED lover in public places if you didn't want the publicity…" she sneered. Will was already overwhelmed by all the conflicting emotions playing in the arena of his skull, and he snapped for good. His eyes were flashing fire while he closed the distance between him and Freddie, resolute and fearsome. Freddie saw Will's face and stepped back. "You really are a piece of work, Freddie" he hissed. "You and that lousy shit you write online. If I were you, I'd pack my bag before the Ripper gets tired of your bullshit." Freddie swallowed, then tried to act brave "Did you just threaten me, agent Graham?" Will narrowed his eyes, but decided to not reply anything. Instead he walked away.

As he sat in his car, Will dialled Hannibal's number. He needed to hear his voice. He had to tell him about the murder of the barista. It happened so close from the hospital where he was working. Could the Ripper be Hannibal's colleague? He knew he felt a little paranoid just now, but he was also worried to have dragged Hannibal into his dark world. His call kept going to voicemail. Will felt frustrated. He decided to drive back to the forensics lab. Maybe listening to the Science Team and Beverly might offer some new perspective on all of this.

Bluebeard's Space Quest

The pitiful remains of the barista's body were already on one of the cold metal tables and some pictures of the crime scene were on the big screen against the wall. Jimmy was laughing while pointing at one of the pictures "No, really guys, you have to see it to believe it!.." Will looked at the detail he was zooming on. Near the brand of the roasting coffee machine, there was a sticker with a skull-shaped coffee cup... and two barista's tools underneath that made it look like a pirate symbol. Beverly rolled her eyes "If you're going to make a joke about Caribbean Coffee Beans, I'll kick you where the sun doesn't shine, Jimmy!" Zeller was already laughing hard "Oh, come on! You gotta admit it's funny. Let's ask Will. Hey, Will! You noticed the symbol?" Will looked at the screen and smiled despite himself. Laughing was something the forensic team used to get the steam out. Working on gruesome murders could get on you if you let it.

"Yes, that's funny... Maybe it was what gave the morbid idea of roasted barista coffee to the Ripper?.." He felt so empty inside, that sarcasm was the best he could offer right now. The team didn't notice, and they all laughed heartily. Will felt so lonely, he thought of Hannibal, but turned to Jack who was getting impatient "Beside your childish joke, do you have anything of interest for our case?" Price did get the vibe "Yeah, we were already able to confirm that the barista died from organs harvesting. He was still alive when the Ripper took his kidneys and liver, and died when he took his heart…" - "The guy knew the killer, no defence wounds. I'm guessing he was kinda ready to see himself die, but more likely he fainted from pain and terror. Anyway, not a good way to die…" completed Zeller.

Jack answered, "It's NEVER a good way to die when it's the Ripper. And what about the coffee machine? Were you able to get some prints from it? Ok, I know it's the Ripper, but one day even he will make a mistake…" Will breathed out loudly "Don't count on it, Jack! He already tempted us for years now. He never made a mistake. We have nothing, nada! Not even a partial print! He is so controlled, I don't see him making a mistake now…" Jack sighed painfully "If the barista knew the Ripper than he is a customer... Maybe he works in the area, and that is HIS mistake!" - "There must be a hundred people going through that coffee shop everyday, Jack…" - "Yes, but we know that the Ripper has a medical background because of the precision of his cuts when he harvests…" - "Could be... Or it could be what he wants us to think and why he killed nearby the Hopkins hospital…" - "You have to give me something here Will…" - "Ok, I'll check the hospital, see if anything flashes out of the ordinary." Will said reluctantly. He still hadn't heard from Hannibal. Maybe he should go to the hospital instead.

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It was the end of a long day for Chilton. His last patient was in the waiting room and he was reviewing the notes of his last session. He closed his file before inviting the guy in. While the patient entered, Chilton opened his drawer and took out his file. Bryan Fuller was a rather disturbed man; he heard voices and claimed that the Angel of Death was always following him around, telling him who was going to die. Chilton should have referred him to the BSHCI doctors for a better review, but he was too arrogant to admit he couldn't handle this

case. Fuller would make another interesting chapter in his book. As he flipped through Fuller's file, Chilton suddenly paused. Usually Bryan never stopped talking, but this time there was only silence. Chilton looked up from his file and saw Bryan over him - pointing a serrated blade to his head.

"What… what are you doing? Bryan? P...p...put the knife down…" Chilton slowly stood up, his eyes never leaving the blade. Fuller's eyes were wild. He was mumbling over and over again "Time to die!.. The hour has come... I told you about the death rippers... but you didn't listen to me... Nobody ever does…" Chilton tried to remember the way to deal with patient in a psychotic crisis. *Keep talking Frederick... don't panic…* He was panicking nonetheless. He ran towards the entrance of his office, where he had a collection of canes, grabbed the first one he was able to, without looking. Bryan chased after him, the knife gripped tightly in his hand. Chilton was sure that Bryan was about to stab him. Before he could come any closer, Chilton swung the cane and brought it down on his patient's head. The resounding crack echoed across the room. Bryan Fuller fell to the ground like an uprooted tree in the forest.

Chilton sat on the floor with his back against the door. Breathing hard he realised what he had done. *Oh god! I've just killed a man!* He was finished, his career ruined. He knew that this guy was a problem, he should have given him a referral… Chilton crawled up to his desk and picked up the phone. He called Bedelia "B...Bedelia? It's me... I… I need your help…" - "What's wrong? Why are you panting? What happened, Frederick?" - "Not on the phone... Please... please, Bedelia, come to my office!" Chilton started to panic again. He felt his chest tighten, sweat dripping down his back. He jerked when he heard someone knocking on the door. Chilton almost screamed in fright, but managed to get up to answer the door. When he saw Bedelia standing outside, he quickly pulled her in and shut the door. "What the hell is going on?" Bedelia demanded. Then, seeing Chilton's pale face, she looked around and saw a man lying on the floor with blood seeping from his scalp and forehead. "What did you do Frederick?" she almost screamed.

"I was only defending myself, Bedelia... he attacked me!" Bedelia bent down and looked at the body. In the man's palm was a knife, still in his grasp. "Give me your tie…" Chilton immediately removed his tie and gave it to her. She wrapped the tie around her fingers and slowly pried the knife from the man's palm. "It's a fake knife." Chilton almost fainted "Oh god! I killed an innocent man!" Bedelia then bent down again and took the man's pulse; the guy was still alive. "No, he's not dead... yet!" Her eyes narrowed. Then without thinking, she strangled him with Chilton's tie. Chilton watched in horror. "What… no... NO! Why are you?.." Bedelia kept the tie around the man's neck, twisting it hard. "Shut up! I hate weak links!" It was so good to feel the power over that man. She had never experienced such ecstasy. Chilton was shaking all over and looked at her with fear as she was smiling with bliss. When she came back to her senses after some long minutes, everything was done. She realized that she had snapped and finished Chilton's patient. She looked at Chilton with despise. It was not the time to panic, she could only do one thing. She got up and went to Chilton's desk to call Hannibal.

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Will parked his car in front of the emergency entrance at Hopkins hospital. His FBI badge gave him that kind of privilege. He asked the receptionist the direction for the director's office. He took the lift thinking of Hannibal. If the Ripper was indeed working here, Hannibal could be on his next victims' list. There was no doubt that the Ripper had seen them together as he now killed twice in the surrounding of his meetings with Hannibal. First at the hotel, and now at the coffee shop. It was possible that the Ripper believed to have some kind of special connection with Will and was somehow jealous or upset to see him with Hannibal. Maybe he turned his rage on some innocent bystanders for now, but he could go against Hannibal next time. Will closed his eyes as he felt a stabbing pain to the heart. He realized that he wasn't sure to be able to live on without Hannibal. That should have been frightening in itself, and it would have only been few days ago, but now that he had decided that he wanted Hannibal for himself, nothing could stand in his way. Except Hannibal…

When he arrived on the top floor, Mr Pierce, the director, was already waiting for him in front of the lift door. They shook hands "Agent Crawford called me to tell the purpose of your visit, Agent Graham. We will do anything to help." - "Good, thank you!" Will answered automatically. "I will need to see your statistics first, and then your staff records." "As long as the patient's' confidentiality is not in question, we will give you access to anything you want." Mr Pierce introduced him to the secretary of staff and left Will in front of a computer. Mrs Hamilton showed him how to access the information he wanted and he spent two hours looking at numbers and graphs. He left the office with the rest of the staff, knowing that he would have to come the next day to do the same. In the entrance hall, he took his phone and called Hannibal again. It rang twice on the other end, then he started breathing again "Hello, Will! I was going to call you. Just got into my office and saw that you tried to call me." - "Yeah... I am so relieved to hear your voice... there has been another murder…" - "Oh!.." - "At the coffee place where we've met last time... the guy who served us... he... he was roasted!" - "The barista you mean?.." - "Yes, the barista... He was roasted and then the Ripper used the beans to make himself a coffee!" "Oh, I see. Are you okay, Will? You sound tired…" - "Yes... by the way, I am in the entrance hall of your hospital right now…" - "You are?!" - "Yes, I wanted to speak with you about that... Do you have time now, or maybe later?" "Give me ten minutes and I'll be with you, Will."

Will was pacing in front of the reception desk while waiting for Hannibal. It was nice to have decided he wanted Hannibal, but what did Hannibal want? Too much to think... Just now he aspired to quiet his mind and to feel Hannibal's warmth around him. He needed it almost as much as air to breathe. He forced himself to open his eyes again and look at the people around him absently. Bad move at the hospital if you have an empathy disorder, he thought as he felt now even more raw. Then it felt like a fresh and calming breeze on his neck. Will sensed him and turned to see Hannibal approaching with a small smile.

They gazed at each other to reassure themselves on what they have. Hannibal put his arm around Will's shoulders and naturally kissed his temple. Will sighed, feeling loved. He knew then that he would never want to give up this special relationship with Hannibal. They walked to the entrance "Let's talk in my car and decide what to do tonight, shall we?" Hannibal kindly drove him to his car. "Yeah... ok" sighed Will. "I can see how your job is taking a heavy toll on you, Will…" - "Nothing I can't handle…" Will answered. "But you're not handling it well... Do you still have nightmares?" Will blushed "You know, the nightmares don't come when I'm with you... I mean... those times we… slept together… it's

like... like they don't exist." Hannibal smiled "I am glad to have been of some use…" Will laughed "Yeah... some use…" - " You are so amazing when you smile, Will. I just want you to smile always and be at your side to see you smile."

Without warning the tone of Hannibal's voice changed, becoming serious. Will stopped walking, thinking that this was it, this was when Hannibal would call it quits. So he opened his mouth before Hannibal could say anything. "Please don't... It hurts and I don't want to think about that now…" - "So then I will not." - "I wanted to speak with you about the murder... murders in fact. The hotel and now the coffee shop…" Hannibal opened the car and they sat inside. "It might be an exaggeration on my part, but there is a small possibility that the Ripper is a staff of John Hopkins hospital." Hannibal felt his heart quicken a little but remained calm "What makes you say that?" Will ran his fingers through his hair "The precision of cuts... Only a surgeon or someone with a medical background would know how to do that... using the correct instruments of course. The... the way the bodies were cut and how carefully the organs were removed... this is not an amateur job." Hannibal wanted to embrace Will. Had his David finally placed the pieces of the puzzle together?

"Also the fact that the precedent murder happened in the hotel where we were together makes me think I, or you, could be the victim of a stalker. I know that Freddie Lounds gave me a lot of unwanted publicity lately... and I feel bad that I dragged you into my unsavory world…" Hannibal took Will's hand in his, "Will, there's nowhere I would rather be... danger nor not, I want to be beside you and I hope you want to be beside me too." Will was speechless. *How is this real? How did I get so lucky, that this perfect guy hasn't run off after all the shit that's happened?* "Hannibal... I…" Hannibal leaned over, about to kiss his David, but they were interrupted by the ringing of Hannibal's phone. "I'm sorry, dearest…" Hannibal looked annoyed, but answered the phone "Yes... Calm down, tell me more… Okay, I will come right away... Don't do anything until I arrive." Hannibal's tone was cold and professional. He leaned over Will and kissed him slowly, deeply and languorously. Will put everything into the kiss, his way of telling Hannibal all that he wasn't able to put in words. Need and mostly love. Desire made him shiver. Eternity for a few minutes.

When they broke apart Hannibal caressed Will's cheek. "Please have dinner with me tonight. I feel myself longing for your presence. I wish to wake up next to you, and maybe make love to you throughout the night." Will laughed "Yes! I want that too! But I need to feed the dogs... and seems you have an emergency too…" - "Would you allow me to come to your house? I could wait for you while you settle your dogs." - "Yeah... sure... you can meet my pack." Hannibal pecked Will's cheek "I would love to meet your... family, Will." "How long do you think you need before coming to my place?" - "Two, maybe three hours max…" - "Ok then, I'll see you there." Will opened the Bentley door and went to find his car.

Black Hole Discovery

The only thing on Hannibal's mind, as he drove towards Bedelia and Chilton's office building, was the thought of seeing Will later. Bedelia sounded frantic over the phone. Something about a patient and an accident. Hannibal didn't pay much attention; having Will in the car with him was rather distracting. He parked his Bentley and got out. When he entered Chilton's office, Hannibal saw Frederick huddled in the corner. Then he noticed Bedelia standing with her arms folded across her chest. A few feet away on the floor was the body of a man, probably in his mid forties. There was a small pool of blood under his scalp and noticeable bruises around his throat. "I... I strangled him..." Bedelia said softly. "Once the body enters full rigor mortis, the bruising will be more prominent. Ligature marks as well as your fingerprints will also be…" Bedelia tugged his arm. "Please! Please, Hannibal… make this go away... I... we... Frederick and I will do anything."

Hannibal smiled inside. Oh, he had both of them under his full control now. He felt like a god. From Bedelia, his glance shifted towards Frederick. "You were attacked. Where's the weapon?" Frederick pointed at the knife on his table. One look and Hannibal knew it was a fake knife. "What did you strangle him with?" - "My... my tie…" Frederick said, still shaking in the corner. Bedelia snorted looking at him with contempt. *They are so perfect for each other,* Hannibal thought. "I will help you if you both ask me to. Bedelia, do you want my help with the body?" "Yes, I already told you so. Do you want me to beg?" "I'd do it despite the great risk for my career and my life, so a little appreciation is not too much to ask." Hannibal answered her with a stone cold face. He turned towards Frederick "And you, Frederick, do you want my help to dispose of your patient's body?" - "Oh, my god! I killed my patient!.. No, Bedelia killed my patient... I have nothing to do with all that…" screamed Chilton pointing an angry finger at Bedelia. "Is that so? Do you want me to call the police so they can sort out responsibility in your patient's murder…" - "Oh, I am sure that I will look as guilty as her!.. I am left with no choice... Please, please Hannibal help us... I don't know how I will survive this night…" - "I will help you, but I want you to do exactly as I tell you now, and any time I will call on you. This is non negotiable." Chilton opened his mouth to protest but stayed silent. He tightened his arms around his knees, nodded and lowered his head.

Hannibal took the patient's coat hanging on the rack next to the door. He palpated the pockets through the fabric, *no car keys, good.* Then he barked an order to the simpering fool Bedelia was sleeping with "Chilton, get up and give me your patient file. Then you and Bedelia will roll the body, the knife, the tie and the patient's coat in the rug. Tie it with some tape as tight as you can. I will move my car to the back entrance." Avoiding each other's eyes, Bedelia and Frederick did as they were told, and when Hannibal came back he gave them his last instructions "Frederick, tomorrow buy a new rug as similar as possible to this one, then flip a cup of coffee on it and bring it to the dry cleaner. If the receptionist asks about the missing rug in your office, tell her you spilt coffee on it and had to bring it to the

dry cleaner. Bring it back in three weeks, long enough to forget about its pattern. For the rest, both of you, ACT EXACTLY AS YOU USUALLY DO. NEVER SPEAK AGAIN OF WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT EVEN BETWEEN YOU. Am I clear?" They both looked very tired now after all the emotions and stress. They stayed silent but nodded. Hannibal gave them a last threatening look "Now go home and forget everything about tonight." Hannibal took the rug on his shoulder and left.

After a short stop at his bachelor house to deposit his macabre load and briefly clean the car, Hannibal was on the road to Will's house. He felt happy and lighthearted like a teenager going to a date. Will was a miracle in his life. He will do everything to keep him there. It was thrilling and even for him a little unnerving to fall in love like this... But god, it was good to feel alive again! His mind palace had now a spring smell and a soft light flooded all the rooms, even the darkest ones that he had never wanted to enter again. The one hour drive passed very quickly, and the smile never left Hannibal's face. It lit up even more when Will came out to the porch, and down the steps to welcome him. They embraced each other in a deep and endless kiss. *Home is another person,* they both thought in unison. The comforting feeling was soon replaced by an engulfing desire.

Will slid himself between the two sides of Hannibal's coat and stroked his hand idly over his chest. He craved skin contact. It was too much for Hannibal to resist anymore and his control fell apart. He pushed Will inside hurriedly. The dogs got alarmed and only hearing their master laugh put them at ease. Conveniently Will's bed was in the middle of the living room. Both panting and moaning they crashed on the bed, Hannibal on top of Will. "I want you… my beautiful David…" Hannibal whispered into Will's ear. Will laughed, his head back exposing his throat "...you know, every time you call me David I have to remind myself that you're referring to the sculpture and not... not calling out the name of your ex…" Hannibal chuckled too "Darling, after having you... I would never want another." His voice was so sincere that Will's heart leapt with joy. *Hannibal really wants ME!* He swallowed hard and ran his thumb along Hannibal's angular cheekbone, both lost in each other's eyes. Lust was too strong and soon they found themselves kissing and biting and sucking. They went on until the need to undress was urgent.

Hannibal moved back a little, removing his jacket, tie and shirt. Will began to pull off his t-shirt himself. They watched each other, fire in their eyes, as they continued to remove their clothes. Then Will laid back on the bed, gazing lustfully at Hannibal's naked body. Hannibal himself fought his own animalistic need to ravage Will. "Do you know how long I have waited for this?" Will grinned "Nope... but do YOU know how many times I've jerked off thinking about you?" Will's laugh was cut off by a deep growl from Hannibal himself, as the older man pounced on his lover. He pinned Will to the mattress, sucking on Will's tongue. Will didn't want to be outdone. With shaking hands, he caressed Hannibal's body greedily, stroking his broad shoulders. "Ha… Han… Hannibal…" - "Tell me, my Love... tell me what do you want... I'll give you anything…" Will moaned as Hannibal's teeth nibbled his throat

and shoulder, moving down to his chest. “Make... me yours... completely…” Hannibal paused, his mouth hovering over one of Will’s nipples. Will shivered and threw his head back, letting Hannibal touch him as he pleased.

This felt different. This time Will’s words touched something deep inside of Hannibal. It had awoken his long dormant soul, which he thought was dead and dark. Dead like his beloved Mischa, dark like the night he had killed the pig who insulted his Aunt Murasaki. Somehow he felt relieved. He had missed that. God he had missed that so much. The brush of another soul against his. Will Graham not only opened the lock around his caged heart, he also accepted Hannibal’s darkness. The same darkness which secretly stirred inside Will too. “Yes, my dear... your wish is my command...” Hannibal’s voice seemed to break with sadness. Will blinked up at him, hoping for an explanation. But instead, Hannibal kissed him deeply. Will kissed back, pulling Hannibal closer, trying to melt their bodies into one being. He slid his bare calf along Hannibal’s and pressed into the solid heat of his body. He reconnected with the sensation of the thick hair on Hannibal’s chest and belly crackling softly against his bare skin. It was electrifying to feel Hannibal’s stiff length pressing against his own.

Hannibal slid his leg between Will’s thighs. “When... I… take you... don’t hold back, Will…” Will nodded, his own hands still touching Hannibal all over. The lube felt cold against Will’s feverish skin. “Surgeon hands…” Will chuckled. Hannibal rolled his eyes “Be a good patient... We, surgeons abhor unruly patients…” Will flicked Hannibal’s ear “So full of yourself.” Hannibal grabbed Will’s hand before he could be flicked again. “YOU my dear... will be FULL of me in a while…” - “Promises, promises… OH!” Will’s body jerked as he felt Hannibal’s finger probe him. He arched and Hannibal kissed him deeply to distract him from the burn as he penetrated him slowly. “You... are... mine, Will Graham. Forever…” Hannibal said, as he continued fingering Will slowly with care, attentive to his moans. Will’s eyes glistened with tears. “Sounds… like a... pro... proposal…” he swallowed, watching Hannibal’s face. “Maybe it is… just... a glimpse of... how serious I want us to be.” Hannibal licked delicately over Will’s full lower lip and pulled it into his mouth.

Will pressed his hip up against Hannibal’s hand, shaking and whimpering. Drowning without restraint in the shared pleasure of their physical contact that he didn’t want to deny himself anymore. Hannibal’s teasing exploration intensified with a second finger sliding inside Will. He could smell the heat of his arousal and tightened his grasp on Will’s wrists as he instinctively twisted to get free. Gasping in slow motion rhythm with Hannibal’s fingers inside him, Will arched up, pressing his thighs on either side of Hannibal’s hips. Will felt like a drifting ship which finally reached the shore, anchored firmly by Hannibal. He didn’t mind the marks left behind. This was Hannibal’s way of claiming him, telling the world that Will belonged to him. His body ached with need, as Hannibal entered yet another finger. “I... I’m ready… please... Hannibal… I want you…” Will moaned, begging for more. Hannibal realised he had held back for too long. All his previous sexual partners have never satisfied

him fully. Then he met Will with whom it was not just physical, but also spiritual. He tasted Will and now he could not imagine not having him. Removing his fingers, Hannibal searched Will's face for any trace of doubt. Will laid back, his throat and shoulders bearing Hannibal's teeth marks. "Will…" Hannibal whispered. Will opened his eyes and nodded. This was all Hannibal needed. He coated his cock with lube, aligned himself and pushed ever slowly but firmly into Will.

Once again, Hannibal found himself the audience to a chamber recital. Will's helpless moans and screams, accompanied by Hannibal's own grunts in the background, was a perfect musical concerto. He panted with the effort of holding on, fighting the urge of his frantic need for release. Watching Will's ecstasy when he began to pound against his prostate was too much. Will threw his head back, tears rolling down the sides of his cheeks. Hannibal wanted to lick those salty drops as Will's ankles dug into his ribs. Both moved in a swinging rhythm. Will and Hannibal seemed to be caught in the breathing movement of the living universe. An eternal frenzy of life and desire where all living beings melt in pure pleasure, a void of all thinking. A blissed oblivion where souls joined in one. Will came screaming Hannibal's name. His cum, a thick, warm liquid that spread over their chests and bellies. Hannibal followed soon after, Will's name escaping his lips. He rested his forehead on Will's shoulder, breathing in Will's scent, a shipwrecked man hanging on a rock. Will's grip on Hannibal's shoulders loosened and his arms fell back onto the mattress. Hannibal reached out slowly, linking his fingers with Will's. They stayed like that for a long time. They made love all through the night, not caring about the world around them. Will's dogs laid by the fireplace, their ears pricked up wondering about the strange sounds coming from their master and the other man.

Reflection of the Sun

Will was laying down on a green field dotted with multicolored flowers. He heard birds singing joyfully in the background. The air was warm and he felt spring sun rays on his naked skin. It was serene and peaceful. He heard it before he felt his muff sniffing along his arm. It was making low noises with his throat. It was friendly, as if the stag saluted him in its own way. Still the imposing animal had an impressive force that pushed him to be on his guard. The stag emitted an odor of musk... and of fresh coffee. That last part alone woke Will up completely. He leaned on his forearms as he reoriented himself. He was in the middle of his bed in disarray after a torrid night with Hannibal, who was singing in his kitchen, from which escaped an enticing smell of eggs and coffee able to raise a dead man. He obeyed the call of his stomach and rejected the sheet. His body showed suck and bite marks here and there, and he smiled as he saw them. He stood up and picked up his boxers from the ground. He put them on before going to the kitchen.

“Smells great! Didn’t know I had anything in my fridge or cupboards...” Hannibal turned to face Will, smiling “Good morning, Will. I realised that perhaps your cupboards might be bare, so I brought a few things from my home.” Will laughed. Then he walked up to Hannibal and kissed him soundly. “Hmm… now this IS a good morning” Hannibal pulled Will back before he could move away “...and I want more of these, Will…” Will looked back at him surprised by the sudden serious tone. They exchanged a gaze that said much more. “But for now, sit down and enjoy your breakfast!” Hannibal said with a voice playful again. He displayed some eggs, sausages and artistically cut tomatoes on their plates. Will sat at the table, blinking in awe. *I have a set of plates? And matching coffee cups?* Will blinked at the table before helping himself to the food. Hannibal sat at the table facing him. Will chewed his food and moaned in appreciation “Oh my god! Yes, I want more of this too! Breakfast like this every day!” Hannibal chuckled, his eyes never leaving Will as he chewed on the sausages. The barista had put all his heart into creating the cup of coffee, just to please Will. So Hannibal thought it was only fitting to use the pig’s heart to please him again. “It would be my pleasure, dearest. I can also teach you how to prepare something simple…” - “Yes!” Will said immediately, then he flushed, “I... I mean… I don’t want to sound so eager or desperate...” Hannibal touched Will’s hand “I love your spontaneous nature, Will. Never be sorry for that.”

While they ate, they talked about the new Ripper case. Will mentioned then that he was looking through the John Hopkins hospital files. “For now, I don’t know what I am really looking for yet, mostly something out of the ordinary, that doesn’t meet the obvious stuff that could be expected,” Will explained. Hannibal looked at him from beneath his eyelids “John Hopkins has a very important surgery service…” “I know, Hannibal... I’m not saying that... that I...” Will ran his finger through his curls “The thing is, all the Ripper’s victims have had such precise incisions. Only an expert would cut that way. And... the last two victims… we’ve met them. We sort of knew them. What if... what if the Ripper knows us? Or he’s

stalking us? Or more precisely, one of us?" Hannibal kept his eyes on Will "Do you think he could be one of my colleagues? Do you think he's watching you, Will? Does Jack think the same?" "I didn't want to tell Jack about us... I mean, this my private life. He... he's already invading everything else of mine." Hannibal frowned. *Is Agent Crawford bullying my Beloved? Perhaps I should revise my opinion of him.* "Is Jack... controlling you, Will?"

Will chuckled "No... it's nothing like that. He's… he desperately wants to catch the Ripper. He's been breathing down our necks all this time. Me, Beverly, Price, and Zeller... I think he… he reminds me Captain Ahab chasing after Moby Dick!.." - "It didn't end up too good for him... If I can ever do something to help you at the hospital, let me know, Will. I know my way through the labyrinth of our administration…" - "Thanks, Hanni…" Will smiled shyly "I mean…" Hannibal's smile widened "I don't mind you calling me Hanni… my... Mischa used to call me that, as she was learning to speak." Will glanced at his lover. "Mischa?" - "My sister. She... I lost her, after I lost my parents…" Will extended his arm over the table and put his palm on Hannibal's cheek, silently caressing it. Hannibal leaned against his palm with a content sigh. Will was like a balm on his wound that would never close. "Oh, Hannibal... I'm sorry." - "No, dearest... don't be sorry. I may have lost my family... but, now that I have you, I feel whole again." *I love this man!* Will thought to himself, his inner voice screaming out. They finished their coffee and got dressed for their working day. Hannibal had brought a changing set. *This man seems always prepared and so organized,* Will thought mockingly. "You're smirking, Will... What's on your mind?" Will rolled his eyes "How is it... that after mind-blowing sex you can still look so... tidy and... neat…" "Darling, one of us has to look good... opposites attract…" Will smacked Hannibal's arm playfully.

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When Will arrived at the hospital, Ms Hamilton and the staff were already in the office, chatting about the latest rumors. When they saw him, they stopped talking and looked at him with fake smiles. He usually had this effect on people. *Everyone knows I'm the weirdo from the FBI who thinks like criminals,* Will thought to himself. So he just smiled back, exchanged the few courteous words expected from him and got to work. He bravely swallowed countless reports and graphs, and stopped only when his eyes were not able to read numbers anymore. So far he found very high numbers of deaths in the surgery service, but it didn't mean anything without a comparison of the population being admitted to Hopkins. Will must have been there for quite a while when he heard a knock on the door. Looking up from the file he was holding, Will blinked several times and then he removed his glasses. "Oh, Mr Pierce…" The man smiled at Will. "How is your research going, Agent Graham? I do hope you find something... but at the same time I hope you find nothing…" He laughed at his own silly comment. "The problem is, if there is something that leads to a full investigation, it would be hell for our reputation. John Hopkins is a very reputable hospital in Baltimore... and probably in the whole country too." Will cringed internally. He knew all these types, always more concerned about status and shareholders' dividends.

“I understand, Mr Pierce. But I can’t ignore it if I find anything important. And I do hope you won’t hinder our investigation, regardless of this hospital’s reputation... Interfering with an FBI investigation is…” Mr Pierce quickly answered “No! No, of course we will cooperate fully with the authorities.” - “In fact, I found something odd, an unusually high number of deaths of the patients going through the surgery service. Do you have an idea to explain that?” Mr Pierce smiled gently like he was about to explain something simple to a kid “Oh, there is nothing odd in those statistics. Our reputation attracted us the heaviest cases, maybe, as I said before, from the whole country. Cases that other hospitals refuse to insure to be able to show good numbers to their eventual customers. We have the best surgeons here, and of course difficult cases result in more deaths even in those favorable conditions.” Will nodded as he heard a confirmation of what he suspected. “I’m sure you know about our excellent Surgery Service... I saw you talking to our very best surgeon, Dr Lecter...”

Will blushed “I... yes, we were…” Mr Pierce just went on talking, ignoring Will’s stammer. “He’s a wonder… a real asset to our Hospital. My son owes him his life. Without Dr. Lecter, he wouldn’t have had a chance. No one wanted to operate him, but he performed a miracle for our family. You know? His colleagues call him Grim Reaper!” The man’s laughter was beginning to annoy Will. “You know why? He has this thing... you know… about rude patients and all…” Will’s mind began to flash scenes from the last Ripper murders. “Rude? What do you…” Mr Pierce went on “Yes, he is a little like a capricious diva... If he finds the patient rude somehow, he refuses to take his case. Normally it shouldn’t be a problem as we have many good surgeons in the service, but his skills are really above those of his colleagues and many don’t make it. Very often they die from post-surgery complications. He is so talented that his decision to take a patient or not could result in life or death. That is what earned him his nickname.” He finished laughing, completely unsympathetic to the fate of the patients.

Will felt very uneasy. It was difficult to imagine Hannibal so caring with him as cold as depicted by Pierce. But there was something else, he was revisiting his doubt on the momentary absence of Hannibal that night at the hotel. He thought he should just ask him and not build a castle in Spain about nothing. He brushed it away for now. “Mr Pierce, could you give me access to the files of the patients who died from surgery or complications?” The reaction was instantaneous, Pierce closed up like a mussel “I am sorry, but that is patient confidentiality and unless we have a court order there is nothing that I can do to help here. Our board of directors would certainly not appreciate you digging in those cases with potential lawsuits as a result.” *So much for very good surgeons,* Will thought. Anyway, it was lunch time and Felicia, Ms Hamilton’s intern, came by to take him to a nearby small diner, where they would be enjoying some easy food… not human meat hopefully... His work was done here given these conditions, so he thanked Mr Pierce and Ms Hamilton for their help and left.

After his third surgery of the matinee, Hannibal was enjoying a lunch break in his office at the hospital. He felt serene, a little tired indeed, but behind his closed eyelids the vivid memory of Will in ecstasy hung a perpetual smile to his lips. When he opened his eyes, his gaze fell on Chilton's patient file that he had brought with him. By rote he took it and began to read its contents. The dead guy’s name was Bryan Fuller, a tv producer working for MGM. Hannibal recognized a narcissist when he saw one, and he was a brilliant specimen. Despite his envious mediocrity, Chilton had not been able to ignore the genius of the man. Apparently he was a successful creator. He was thinking about killing people for a living. *“The Ripper could have been one of his characters,”* Hannibal laughed amusedly to himself. Hannibal resented Bedelia and Chilton even more now that he knew who they had murdered. *“It wasn't self-defence and they didn't do anything creative,”* he thought with resentment. It wasn't his murder, so the Ripper couldn't display him like one of his art scenes. He had to display it like an accident, but yet he wanted to do it in a way that would bring some majesty to that death while still erasing all traces.

Beware The Silent Sea

Freddie Lounds woke up that morning in a very bad mood. Those fucking FBI agents refused to let her near the place, so she didn't have very good pictures of the crime scene. Oh, but she did have a very interesting encounter with Will-freak-Graham. Hah! He didn't even try to deny that he was having an affair with a married man. Freddie sat in front of her laptop and began to type her next article. At the same time, she was downloading the pictures onto her hard drive. She had some pictures of the forensic team and some of Graham making faces. "Hmm, shall I write a little bit about Graham's secret affair? Or, should I save it for later?" Laughing to herself, Freddie decided to write about the new Ripper case, and then add a small paragraph about the incompetence of the investigation team. She still had to call Princess Bedelia about paying her the next installment. She smiled at her Vuitton luxury bag set near her coat. She was due more nice things to enjoy, she thought.

She was half through the article when she decided to call the Princess. Dialing Bedelia's number, Freddie waited. She continued to wait and eventually the call went to voicemail. "Shit! The bitch is ignoring me again!" Freddie kept calling Bedelia, not wanting to give up. She was determined to get her payment. That woman was NOT going to rob her of her next luxury fantasy! Eventually, Freddie left a nasty message on Bedelia's answering machine. She thought about calling Chilton. Maybe he might be more receptive to her demand. As a doctor, he was loaded of course. Maybe he might be willing to pay her something too, if she tried to blackmail him instead. She googled for his number. "Dr Chilton speaking." "Hi... this is Freddie Lounds. I'm…" "Oh, YOU! Look, I have nothing to say to you, Ms. Lounds. And... and please stop calling Be...Dr. Du Maurier…" Freddie laughed. "Oooh... is she there with you? Look, I just want my money, ok. Your girlfriend owes me for spying on her Charming Prince husband. I don't believe you would like it either if I publish some... very intimate pictures of you and your Dr Du Maurier..."

She heard Chilton gasp and then mumble something to someone in the room. Then a familiar voice came, "Listen, you snivelling creature! I could destroy you!" "Oh please! I'm the one with the incriminating pictures, Princess! Now, you owe me... or should I just publish this... and let your husband find out?" There was a shout in the background. Freddie heard Chilton telling Bedelia not to provoke the woman and to just pay her to shut up. Freddie smiled to herself, *"Oh, this is easy!"* "Well? What will it be, Doctor Du Maurier?" She heard a hysterical laugh on the other end of the line, "Listen, bitch! You will not get anything anymore from me. Everyone knows everything now. There is no more room for your dirty games. If you ever call me again, I will notify the police and see you in court. Am I clear?" Freddie was a little taken aback, still hearing Chilton begging her to pay in the background, but she got over her deception very fast "Oh, I understand... Now that my services are no longer required, you and your fucking high class lover decided to close the ranks. I should have known better than to associate myself with well-to-do…"

“Think whatever you want Ms. Lounds but we were never associated.” Bedelia hung up. Freddie almost threw her phone across the room. “Fine, if she doesn’t want to pay me, I’ll entertain myself with all this dirt!” She amused herself quoting Dr. Chilton about adultery being “of course always more glamorous in silk sheets”, of the high society, and so contemptuous of the laymen. She finished her Tattle Crime piece with some other poisoned paragraphs about the vices of the money people. Then she began another side column about the FBI being incompetent. She wrote about how there was something that the FBI were hiding, not letting the Press do its job of giving “so needed” information to the public. “Oh, Bedelia, you picked the WRONG woman to mess with!” Freddie rubbed her palms with glee as her article went online.

Frederick Chilton was hyperventilating now. Bedelia told him to breathe deeply to calm down, but the panic didn’t leave him. He was thinking about the appointment that he would have tomorrow with the Baltimore mayor and the committee in charge of recruiting the next Director for the BSHCI. Chilton was desperate for the post. Then there was his book, with all his studies and cases which was going to be a best-seller. At the end of arguments, Bedelia told him that he should on the contrary be flattered. He was the seductor here and his colleagues would without doubt see the whole story like he stole the wife of a prominent surgeon. She cajoled him further by telling him that of course she would be happy to confirm the “official” version in marrying him after she obtained a divorce from Hannibal. Chilton imagined the faces of his colleagues, especially if he attended the Opera with a trophy wife on his arm, and he liked the vision. He had always been envious of Hannibal Lecter, and now he would be the talk of the town.

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Will clicked the next slide, “...as you can see, these cuts were made post-mortem. It’s as if the killer wanted to…” A hand went up from the third row. “Mr Graham? Sir... what about the cuts made by the Ripper? Would it be the same…” “Hey! We’re not talking about the Ripper today... now, back to the…” As Will turned back to the screen, from the corner of his eye he noticed someone else putting up his hand. Will sighed, removed his glasses and rubbed his forehead. “Ok, ok… fine. What do you guys want to know about the Ripper? Remember, I can’t say much about an ongoing investigation.” A trainee in the first row, Veronique from Louisiana like himself, but speaking with a strong French accent, put her hand up and without waiting to be called, asked, “Mr Graham, is the Ripper a medical expert?” The question took Will by surprise. “There’s a possibility, yes. But we haven’t confirmed anything yet. He could be someone with expert knowledge, or he could have practiced on his earlier victims before perfecting his skills to this level.” The discrepancy of his somehow admirative tone and the horror of the content made the students uneasy. “Could the Ripper... be someone from law enforcement? I mean, he has not left any evidence…” Will sighed again, “As I said before, for now we cannot speculate about his true identity. All we know is that the Ripper is meticulous, neat, precise, skillful…” Will stopped talking as his mind went

back to Hannibal. *“Hanni...is always neat... he...he likes order... He’s a skillful surgeon. Wait! He’s not the Ripper! He can’t be! Stop thinking like that, Graham!”*

“Mr Graham? Sir?” Will looked around the lecture hall. “Erm, yeah... sorry... I’m... just a little tired…” A cheeky voice from the back said, “Late night with the new boyfriend...” There was a laughter which made Will flush. He cleared his throat, pretending not to hear the comment, and continued his lecture. Then another trainee said loudly, “Yeah, way to go Graham! The guy looks very handsome... and very MARRIED!” More laughter followed. Will blinked in the darkness, trying to see who it was that made the comment. Then he motioned for the lights to be switched back on. “Ok, what’s so funny? At least I’m getting laid... can’t say the same for the rest of you...” The whole class laughed now, some laughing at the trainee who teased Will. “Enough... yeah... ok... time-out guys! Now, for your homework I want an essay on how rumors influence public panic, especially when tabloids write about serial killers. You should know better than to read such dirt… yes, I know... stop grumbling. I want that essay by next week. Ok, you guys can go.” Will dismissed the class. He sat in his chair with his head in his hands. A soft knock on the door made him look up.

“Tough class?” Beverly walked in, carrying two cups of coffee. “Oh, you’re a God-sent!” Will exclaimed, grabbing one of the cups from her. “So... I... read Freddie’s latest shit-story…” Will groaned, “What did she write about this time? More crap about the case? More rubbish about the FBI? Or, is she saying I’m going to run off with someone from the British Royal family?” Beverly giggled, “Nope. This one has pictures of you and your Doctor holding hands in a very classy restaurant. He’s hot Will... like SERIOUSLY gorgeous! Where did you find him? Does he have a single brother for me?” Will laughed, almost spilling his coffee, “Shut up! No, no brother... just... just an angry wife…” “Freddie also added something about his wife having an affair and dirty rich people…” Beverly then continued, “And guess what? Good ‘ol Dr Chilton was quoted too.” Will’s eyes widened, “Really? Wha... did she ask him about me?” “No... I don’t know how she bumped into Chilton, but apparently he mentioned something about adultery being ‘more glamorous in silk sheets’...” Will stared at Beverly. “Chilton... Somehow I knew he was seeing someone... But Dr. Du Maurier, Hannibal’s wife who played so well the outraged wife?.. who knew...” Will shrugged, sipping his coffee.

Beverly put down her coffee cup, “So... tell me... HOW was your day?” When she saw Will blush and look away, she laughed. “Graham got laid! Hot damn!” Will chuckled too, even as he blushed harder, “Yeah, yeah laugh all you want, Katz. At least I’m getting some…” Beverly let out a mock gasp, “Ouch! Well, I’m happy for you, Will. Really... I mean, after all that... mess with Alana…” Will shook his head, “It wasn’t a mess... just... a misunderstanding on my part. She saw it as a one night stand because of… my... instability. While I thought we had something more. It’s all water under the bridge, you know. Alana’s ok... I’m ok...” Beverly touched Will’s arm, “You were NOT ok, Will. I had to come pick you up from the bar coz you were trying to drown yourself in alcohol.” Will sighed, “Ok, so I wasn’t ok.

But... this is different. I think... no, I feel something more with Hannibal." Beverly smiled benevolent, "I am just happy to see you smile more, Will. However, it could be short as Jack asked me to drag you to the lab." They finished their coffee in complicit silence before heading for the lab.

When they arrived at the lab, Zeller and Price were already playing one of their courtship argument and Jack was grumbling about them being on the case instead of playing eternal teenagers. They didn't seem to agree with him, but shifted to the barista's case nonetheless. "...so what else did the son-of-a-bitch take?" Jack's voice stern as always, dominating the room. Price looked up from the corpse. "Well, heart's gone... and liver too… and the tongue..." Zeller interrupted, "The usual stuff he takes…" "...it's usually what he wants to eat…" Will continued. Price and Zeller stared wide eyed. Jack frowned. "A theory, Graham?" Will ignored Jack's remark and said, "He... eats the organs. They're not... trophies... the Ripper is eating what he harvests from the victims." "And the eyes?.." asked Jack. "We found them among the coffee beans. It must have a significance for the Ripper, but no idea what…" Jack turned to Will, "Do you have any input... that is if your mind is still with us...." Will frowned, "Ah, Freddie Lounds' article again... Really, Jack, didn't think you of all people would read that crap..."

Jack folded his arms, "Yeah, well it's the talk of the building today. And the trainees are having a good laugh about how 'Grouchy Mr Graham is finally getting some'..." Beverly cut him off, "Let it go, Jack! We all know Freddie likes trash-talking about us and the cases. She just wishes we would let her into the crime scenes to get exclusive pictures." Will agreed, "Yep, and one of these days she's gonna wish she never wrote such rubbish." There was silence in the lab. Everyone stared at Will. Price said then, "Did... did you just... indirectly threatened Lounds?" "Who doesn't want to see her arrested for trespassing? One day she'll cross that line and I'll be happy to cuff her!" Beverly said, nudging Will. Will nodded, but he felt conflicted inside. *"Why do I feel like grabbing Freddie by the hair and slamming her against the wall repeatedly with vigour?"* He shuddered at that thought, choosing to ignore it. Jack continued to bark orders to everyone, reminding them that with every day they waste, the Ripper would kill again. Will had had enough and just blurted out, "...you're like Ahab chasing after Moby Dick…" Jack turned to Will, eyes burning with anger, "Care to run that by me again?"

Beverly silently mouthed 'no' to Will, but Will didn't pay any attention. "You're so caught up in this... case, Jack. It's like... you're obsessed with the Ripper himself! There are other killers out there and... and other cases to solve..." Jack slammed his palm onto the metal table, "Well, maybe I'd rather bring this bastard to justice once and for all... instead of fucking around with a married man!" Price's jaw dropped, while Zeller swallowed, looking away pretending to read the files. Beverly was angry now, "That was low, Jack... even for you!" "Am I paying you to be my moral conscious, Katz?" Jack yelled back. Will left the lab, not wanting to hear anymore. Jack's words ringing in his ears. His personal life was none of

Jack's business or the FBI for that matter. He had enough of moral lessons from two-faced bitches like doctor Du Maurier, who made a scene at Chilton's office, while fucking her colleague on the side. Enough of all that hypocrisy! Hannibal was the one person who hadn't lied to him so far. At least what he and Hannibal wanted was real and honest. To hell with morality and political correctness! Will's feet carried him towards the cafeteria. He slumped down on one of the chairs in the corner, closing his eyes and trying to clear his mind from Jack's vicious outburst.

Fire and Ice

A gentle hand on his shoulder interrupted his quiet time, “Bev... I just want…” “Will, it’s me.” Will opened his eyes, and there was Alana Bloom. “I was in the corridor outside the lab and heard Jack yelling at you. I read Freddie Lounds’ article too… Funny, I should find out my dear friend is dating through a tabloid reporter...” Will looked away, “I didn’t think you’d want to know... after what happened between us. We don’t talk so much now, you and me, in fact I thought maybe you wouldn't want to talk to me anymore…” Alana sat in front of him, holding his hands as she said, “Will! I would never ignore you! I have a lot of affection for you, you know that.” “ *Friendly conversation, is this what we are having now?”* Will had a sad smile “Yes... I know…” Alana kept her hands around Will’s, “I happen to know Hannibal Lecter and Bedelia Du Maurier. We were studying medicine in following cohorts. Hannibal was lecturer when I was in my last year and later my mentor during my internship at John Hopkins hospital before my specialization in psychiatry. During my internship, I was surprised when I found out that he was to marry Dr Du Maurier.”

Alana smiled, “Hannibal had a lot of charm already and a lot of affairs. I kind of had a crush on him myself. He was the main subject of gossips among the nurses… of both sexes.” Her smile then dimmed, “I thought they were perfect together, two ambitious and successful people finally settling down and maybe starting a family. I guess... I guess all good things come to an end…” “Their marriage was over before it even began,” Will added. Alana’s eyebrows rose, “What?” Will looked away, moving his hand out of Alana’s hold, “He wasn’t happy... Hannibal... They did it for their families… Nevermind, I shouldn’t have revealed something that personal about him.” Will quickly looked away, wanting the conversation to end. Alana understood, “Sorry, I didn’t want to impose, I just wanted to tell you that I am here if you needed to talk, Will. I will always be here if you need me.” She squeezed his shoulder gently to make him feel her words before she got up and left.

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Hannibal left the hospital quite late and tired after too many hours spent in the operating room. When he arrived home, he enjoyed a glass of wine and a slice of liver with parsley, garlic, and fried potatoes. A simple and traditional French recipe usually prepared using calf liver. “ *Not barista liver,”* he smiled to himself. Then he went to his home office and took out his latest sketch book. Flipping through, he gazed at all the many drawings he had done of his David. The beautiful man who brought light to the dark corners of his heart. Hannibal was biding his time. He waited till just after midnight to leave his house. He had one destination in mind - MGM Studio, Vancouver road, in the east industrial area. Before that, he had some work to do. He went to his basement and opened the door of the cold room. The temperature in here wasn’t too cold. Only cold enough for the meat to preserve well before

consumption. He unrolled Chilton's rug, and Bryan's corpse rolled onto the concrete floor. Hannibal rolled up the rug again, and threw it into the combustion chamber. Bryan's tie, plastic knife, and Chilton's cane followed it into the high temperature inferno.

Hannibal then lifted Bryan's body and placed it onto the metal table. He unbuttoned the shirt and turned the body over, face down. Taking care not to cause much damage, Hannibal sliced Bryan's back taking as much meat off as he could without leaving trace of the knife on the bones. " *Perhaps, Bedelia and Chilton would enjoy a nice steak,"* Hannibal thought, thinking up a recipe for the occasion. Maybe he'll serve the meat to them once the divorce goes through. Then he buttoned Bryan's shirt up again and carefully rolled the body into a large plastic sheet, like a burial shroud. He lifted the body and placed it onto a body bag. Once he put the meat in a vacuum bag and back on the cold chamber shelves, he cleaned up his surgical instruments. Hannibal took the body bag up the stairs and out of the back door towards the garage. The body bag was placed next to a familiar canvas bag in the boot of the Bentley. Hannibal already had the next scene in his mind palace.

When Hannibal arrived at the main entrance of the MGM studios, he didn't slow down. He just threw a glance at the guard in his gatehouse. The man was sleeping in his chair in front of a small TV screen. *Perfect!* Hannibal drove by, making sure to park his car right behind the studio. Most buildings usually have little security at the back. Once his car was parked in the shadowed corner, Hannibal got out and silently crept to the back door. It was locked, but nothing his lock pick wouldn't remedy. No security system either, as there was really nothing to steal in there. Security was mainly to keep weird groupies and fans away. He picked the lock, opened the door and then walked back to his Bentley. Put the body bag on his shoulder and closed the trunk silently. The first set he saw was not the one he was looking for. He wanted to find the set where Bryan was shooting his series. Fortunately, some fans had posted pictures with the number of the set he was looking for. He walked past the first set, noticing the numbers and labels as he went. Finally he saw a familiar set up and oriented himself. The one he was looking for was the second one to the right, just before the wardrobe closet.

Hannibal set the body bag down and got to work. He unzipped the bag, carefully removing Bryan's body. The shirt was now stuck to the back, due to the dried blood. Luckily, the frozen corpse didn't bleed out too much. He positioned the body under a scaffolding which supported the spotlights. There was also a rail for the camera. Large black electric cables hung down to the floor... * *Good for tying up the corpse,* * Hannibal chuckled. *Perhaps Bryan "tripped" on the cable and fell. Maybe the wires short-circuited and caused a fire,*
Hannibal's mind palace played various scenes of the "accident". He spread out Bryan's body, face down, making it look like he fell. Then taking one of the loose cables, Hannibal wound it once around Bryan's ankle. He pulled hard on the high voltage cable feeding the electric spotlight. After a few tries, Hannibal had just enough time to jump away as the spotlight fell, lighting up the dark set with a sparkle of dazzling white light forming an electric arc. It crushed Bryan's head as it fell and his coat caught fire instantly. Hannibal pushed a clothing

rack towards the fire, followed by a rolling table supporting a small TV monitor. Thick black smoke filled the air and Hannibal had to leave quickly before he suffocated. He listened by the back door to be sure the guard wasn't awake and doing his round. Silence. Hannibal had just enough time to leave the studio as the flames rose higher. He exited the same way and took his time to lock the door through which he entered.

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The day after, the main title of the Baltimore Sun was about a bloody killing of a zookeeper. Even the FBI forensic team had difficulty to look at his corpse or more exactly what was left of it. His body was horribly mutilated and shredded. Will has been awakened by Jack's short and bossy phone call, "Move your ass, Will! There has been another murder. Not sure if it's the Ripper." Then he gave him the address and hung up. *Good morning to you too,* thought Will. He'd have to smoothen things out with Jack, otherwise he will make his life miserable. He laughed to himself thinking that Jack acted like he was... jealous. Not that he ever had any intent regarding Will, it was more a question of territory. Will was part of his team and it should have been enough. But Will wanted a life for himself, he wanted Hannibal now, and Jack didn't react well to competition.

When Will arrived at the crime scene, Beverly met him at his car. She looked pale. "Bev, you ok?" Will asked, then he quickly stepped away as Beverly bent over and threw up on the ground. "Sorry…" she coughed and then tried to compose herself, "God, it's bad, Will... I... I don't think I can go back there again…" Will gently rubbed her back. Then he reached into the back seat of his car and grabbed a bottle of water, "Here, drink this slowly." Beverly thanked him for the water and Will made his way to the scene. Zeller looked green too. Price kept turning away. When Will looked, he almost choked too. The victim laid on his back, the body covered with deep gorges and bits of flesh were missing. His bowels had been ripped out and the awful stench permeating the air was probably from all the blood and human waste. Before Jack could begin his tirade, Will moved a little closer to the victim and closed his eyes... the pendulum swinging before him.

I'm a beast of prey. I hunt for sport, not for food. I enjoy the hunt, the thrill of the chase. I revel in my prey's fear. I feel powerful as I seize my prey. I pin him down and go into a frenzy… I free my animal instinct from its cage. My claws dig deep, ripping through flesh. Blood excites me, so I keep clawing and tearing. Rapid pulse, the smell of fear, the screams of pain. I use my fangs to bite down on my prey's neck. I am overwhelmed by a feeling of power. I AM THE KING OF BEASTS! "Anything?" Jack's voice cut through the haze. Will blinked his eyes open. He was annoyed. Jack never used to interrupt him until he was ready. Seemed like he really was desperate for an answer. When Jack called out again, Will turned to face him, "...he thinks himself to be some kind of... wild animal. He hunts them for sport…"

“Sport? What the fuck?” Zeller exclaimed, his eyes wide. Jack then motioned for Zeller to continue processing the crime scene with Price.

“Where’s Katz?” Will looked around, and saw Beverly walking up to them. “Hey Boss,” her tired voice replied to Jack. While Beverly and Jack discussed the scene, Will’s eyes kept wandering around the place. They were not too far away from the zoo, but the area was isolated from the main road. It was only by chance that the body, or rather remains, were found. And because of the wounds the body was already rotting quickly. Hence the stench. The killer was not acting for an audience. He was his only intended spectator. For sure, it was not the artwork of the Ripper. Jack surely knew about that, and the disappointment had made him a little bitter. They were looking for a man, not an animal. But a man who thrills in act with the savagery of a beast. A man who likes to identify himself with the wild beast. That was relevant to a personality disorder and the guy may have already flagged some mental health institute’s radar. It was worth the shot. “He may be suffering from a... personality disorder… not like a schizo, but like an identity crisis?” Beverly nodded at Will, “Yeah... maybe he really believes he’s an animal…” Jack then barked his orders, “Check the nearest mental health institutes, and private clinics too... maybe there might have been a patient they treated who identified himself with a beast or displayed violent tendencies bordering on savagery.” “Got it!” Beverly said, then she tugged on Will’s jacket, “Let’s go, partner!” Will followed her, reluctantly.

When they reached his car, she turned to him and said, “I know you want to have it out with Jack, but just wait a bit, ok? Let’s just finish this case. I think we might actually solve this... I mean, there gotta be teeth marks and lots of fibre since the victim fought back.” Will sighed, “Yeah, ok... fine. Let’s go... get a list of clinics to check out.” As Will drove, he shared with Beverly a little more of his thoughts, “The guy doesn’t care to be caught, he will soon attack again... He will escalate to find his thrill and his shot of frenzy. We have to find him quickly.” Beverly agreed, using her tablet, she began looking up the nearest clinics to start questioning. It took them the rest of the day, and when they came back to Quantico, the other teams did not have any more serious suspects. A few guys arrested for brawls with serious bites, but nothing unusual. Jack was pacing the lab as usual, ranting about how anyone could be the next victim. Now they will have to investigate private clinicians and it was a huge consuming work.

By the time Will arrived back home, his dogs were barking frantically. “Whoa! Ok, guys... calm down... yeah Daddy’s home... ok, ok…” Will laughed as all seven of his dogs tried to climb over him simultaneously. Once he checked on the mail he took from the mailbox, he threw himself on the couch. His dogs began to climb over him again. He petted each one of them and let them lick his hands and face. When the dogs were satisfied on greeting him, they curled up by his feet. Will sat on the couch with his head back, trying to relax. He was exhausted from all the door to door questioning. He thought about Hannibal as he drifted off

to sleep. He missed Hannibal and the comfort of feeling the strength of his body against his. How Will wished that he could always wake up to Hannibal holding him in bed.

Will found himself in a cozy bed, with Hannibal. They were lazing around after making love. The arms around Will's body tightened and Will suddenly found himself in another gruesome scene with a beast above him. He struggled to break free, but the hold was too tight. Will began to kick and managed to get loose for a while. The Beast opened its jaws, wanting to bite Will. He was hiding behind a mask but Will saw through him. A young man in his 30's with a feral gaze. His features were not clear to Will, but Will realized that the man wore an animal mask like the ones in museum exhibitions. As if it was made by a taxidermist. The teeth seemed to be taken from animal skeletons. One fang pierced Will's shoulder and made him scream in pain.

Will jolted from his nightmare, his shirt and even his jeans sweat soaked. He realised he was still on his couch. His dogs were around him, with their ears pricked up, whining. "It's ok, guys... I... just a stupid nightmare…" Will looked at his wristwatch. It was almost dinner time. He slowly got off the couch, unbuttoning his damp shirt and throwing it into the laundry basket. Then he prepared some food for his dogs and for himself, TV dinner in the microwave. While the dogs ate, Will had a cold shower. He then ate his dinner, visions of the nightmare still swimming in his mind. Natural museums and taxidermists were a good investigation track. He will tell Jack first thing in the morning. For now, he just needed to rest and to sleep if possible. He wanted his life to be a little more bright than just gruesome murders and nightmares. He was imagining what it could be to share dinners, nights, love and breakfasts with Hannibal again. Later that night, he fell asleep the minute his head touched his pillow.

Death's Shadow On The Moon

It had been a week since Hannibal helped her and Chilton with their ‘problem’. Now Bedelia was on her way to the lawyer’s office. Her own lawyer was already waiting for her at the entrance. “Good morning, Dr Du Maurier.” “Good morning, Mr Larson... I suppose Hannibal’s lawyers sent you the papers for review?” Larson nodded. “I really must advise you to... reconsider the settlement. Are you sure you don’t want any monetary compensation?” Bedelia sighed. Yes, even Chilton told her she was being foolish not to ask for part of Hannibal’s wealth. But Bedelia already agreed and was already indebted to him for covering up the... incident. She didn’t want to ask for his money, since it would make her seem like she was financially desperate. “No, Eddie… I don’t want his money. I have my own. Let’s go in and settle this.” Hannibal was already in the meeting room talking with his lawyer about the procedure and how long it would take for it to be finalised. *The bastard was in a hurry to get rid of her for good and settle down with his brunette whore,* she bit her lip, as her mind thought about that day in Frederick’s office.

“Bedelia… Edward…” Hannibal greeted them both politely, and this made Bedelia all the more resentful. *Pretending to be such a gentleman, while he screws another man on the side!* “Good morning, Hannibal... Mr Brauer” Bedelia was determined to show nothing of her bitterness. Her little girl’s dream was shattering, but as a psychiatrist she knew all about separation and mourning. It didn’t make it easier, but she vowed to never show any weakness. She despised weakness in others and would never allow herself any regret. She sat across the table from Hannibal, all the time glaring at him while both their lawyers discussed the issue. *I thought I knew him, but I never really did* . Then she looked away, wondering what Frederick was up to now. Last night, Frederick had taken her to hear the Baltimore Philharmonic play a tribute to Mozart’s “Marriage of Figaro”. How ironic that her own marriage turned out to be a joke. They talked in the car about the small brief in the Baltimore Sun about the fire at the MGM studio and the charred body of Bryan Fuller found in the rubble. Chilton was just thrilled to be exonerated of the crime. But Bedelia was shocked to realize how easy it had been for Hannibal and the cold efficacity he had demonstrated. Yes, she had not known him despite the years they rubbed each other. She shivered looking at him acting so civilized… He was dangerous, she only realized it now.

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Will arrived at Quantico early that day and found Jack already in his office. He shared his thought about investigating natural conservatory and taxidermists. “Okay, go on with that, Will. I will direct the other teams on taxidermists while you check the museums.” Will sat briefly at his desk to Google the natural history museums in the area. The site of the Natural History Society of Maryland particularly attracted his attention with what seemed to be the

skull of a cave bear on display on their homepage. Its long fangs brought him back to his last night's nightmare. *Rings a bell* , Will thought as he followed his hunch. He definitely needed to visit these people. The Maryland Science Center exhibited a great number of animal and dinosaur skeletons. They even organised talks and field trips. Worth a visit too, and they had their own technician to take care of their collections. Beverly insisted on coming along with Will, "Please, I'll go ANYWHERE with you. I just want to get away from Jack-the-grizzly-bear!" Will chuckled, "Chicken." "Shut up, you hate him when he is in this mood too."

They drove first to Belair road and to the Natural History Society of Maryland. It was a family center and a lot of kids were visiting with their teachers. Will went to the reception desk and showed his badge, "I am Special Agent Graham, and this is my colleague Agent Katz. We would like to meet the person in charge." The young woman, barely in her twenties, was at the desk looking at them with a frown on her face. "Is there a problem, Agents?" When the woman heard Will muttering something about an attack, she gasped, "Fuck! Is there any danger for the children?!" Beverly quickly answered, "Calm down, Ma'am… No, there's no danger to the children. We just have some questions regarding an ongoing investigation." "What investiga... oh, the body found nearby? I thought one of the animals from the zoo escaped…" Beverly continued, "Ma'am, can we please speak to the person in charge? This is important." The lady called on the loudspeaker, "John Darwin, you're requested at the entrance on an urgent matter... Mr Darwin, please come now to the entrance." She gave them a worried look.

A few minutes later, a man in his mid-fifties came to the reception desk. "Jolene, is there a problem?" Jolene swallowed and said, "They're FBI… Am I fired? Did I do something wrong?" The man chuckled, "No, kid... you're fine." Then he turned to Beverly and Will, "Agents, please... let's talk in my office. Jolene's new... I don't want to upset her, it's only her first week on the job." They all sat in an office which was mainly a storage room with a large number of fossils on the shelves, and a desk in the corner. The man closed the door of the cramped office and said, "So, what can I do for you, Agents? What's this about?" "Maybe you heard of the body found near the zoo, not too far from here. We believe it wasn't an animal attack but a man acting like an animal…" The man's eyes widened. Beverly then said, "We would like to know if you've ever meet a passionate collector with a particular interest for predators?" The man had a small smile, "I am sorry but here we are all passionate about our job. Wolves, bears... the Tyrannosaurus Rex especially, are the children's favourite when they came to visit…" Will was not amused by the paternalistic tone of this beard man that clearly escaped from the sixties. "Please, this is not a joke, you know what I mean. We are not here to play revolutionaries against bad cops. People can die in your community if we don't stop this maniac soon." Will explained further, "He could have used some of the... the fossils or exhibits to make an… an animal suit…"

The man's jaw twitched. *Ah, he knows something,* Will thought, as he glanced at Beverly. Beverly gave a discreet nod to Will. "Mr Darwin, if you know anything that might help us,

please don't hesitate to mention it." "There is this young guy who is working at the Maryland Science Center. He is also a contributor here and comes in once a week to help with the other volunteers who take care of the collections. He... I don't know how to say it... He's really into wild animals. Once he growled while standing behind one of the fossils. Some of the children screamed, but others thought it was fun. I know he has an obsession for animal teeth and fangs. One of the volunteers told me he saw a strange look on Randall's face when he was cleaning a cave bear skull, how he caressed the fangs in particular." Mr Darwin chuckled, "Maybe he is just a little creepy and I should not have told you about him... But I know how people of the community are shocked by this attack in our neighborhood, so for once maybe I thought I can help the 'bad' cops." He looked at Will with an inviting smile, the pissing contest was over. "Do you know if Randall is here today?" Will asked. Mr Darwin shook his head and then led them out of the office. "You could try asking the science centre." Beverly thanked him after getting Randall's full name.

She and Will then walked up to their car at the parking lot. "I wonder what makes a guy want to become an animal?" Beverly mused. "Sense of power? Desire to be dominant? Top of the food chain? I should ask Chilton…" Will said sarcastically. Beverly laughed, "Oh please! I don't think your shrink would be able to look at the body we found and not be passing out!" They both chuckled. Will liked the complicity with Beverly, easy and benevolent. Traffic at this hour was not too bad even around the touristic bay. They passed the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace hotel on their way and Will felt an impetus for Hannibal. He missed him too much already. They parked on the service way along Light Street in the back of the museum. The sun was high and the bay was like a tourist postcard. The light reflecting off the water made Will think about his last fishing trip. *I wonder if Hanni would like to go fishing someday,* he thought. "Earth to Graham!" Beverly waved her hand in front of his face. Will playfully pushed her hand away.

They went through waves of Chinese tourists exiting the museum to go back to their buses, and showed their badges at the reception desk. "We would like to meet Mr Tier, please." The guy at the desk didn't show any emotion in particular and just dialled a number. "Hey, Randall, there are some FBI agents here who want to talk to you... none of my business... ok, I'll send them to the hall." The bored looking guy then pointed in the direction of the exhibition hall. They passed the entrance check flashing their badges to the guard outside, and headed into the hall, which had a bold sign saying 'Dinosaur Mysteries'. They instantly knew that the man in white working shirt had to be Tier. He seemed to be stroking the fangs of one of the fossil heads. "Creepy..." Beverly whispered to Will. He looked at them with a feral smile, confident. Will and Beverly presented themselves again. The man kept smiling, "You wanted to speak to me… Why?" Beverly said, "Mr Tier, we'd like to ask you a few questions…" "Randall... I... don't like the name Tier…" "Randall... we would like to know about teeth and fangs of predator fossils, as it seems they could have possibly been used in a case that we are investigating."

“Ha, I read the newspaper about the eviscerated body found near the zoo… but there is much more about the beauty of predators than those gruesome pictures. How could anyone see and appreciate the design of the creator who made them so efficient and perfect for the task they have. Of course, I would help you in any way I could. What do you want me to do?” Beverly showed him some pictures of bites on the body, “Do you have any idea which animal jaw could have left such a mark?” Will let Beverly conduct the interview, he recognized a predator when he saw one, and without doubt Mr Tier wanted to place himself at the top of the food chain. “A cave bear... look here…” Tier lead them to a window with different skulls on display, “You see that skull with the beautiful fangs, this is a cave bear. A marvelous predator that lived for centuries in this area before invasion of mankind.” “Who could purchase such a fossil? Is there a club of collectors that repertories such natural collections?..” “No, they were very common in our region, and still easy to find. A lot of collectors have one piece at minimum as part of our historical heritage. Lot of people are passionate for predators... We didn’t evolve so much…”

Beverly glanced at Will who was touring the other displays, listening. He didn’t seem to have any more questions and she didn’t have to think too much to see that he already had his mind set. She wrapped up quickly with Mr Tier, eager to hear what he had to say. They exited the museum silently. The sunny weather was an invitation for outdoor lunch. Will took his phone out of his pocket and looked at it hesitantly. Beverly got the message, “I get us some coffee while you call your DOCTOR…” she winked noticing Will’s blush. Will turned the phone in his hands for a couple of minutes. The ache when he thought of Hannibal was almost painful. This desire was something new for him. He never felt the need to call on his previous partners. Relationships were always casual without going into complicated attachment. But Hannibal, he was different. He made Will feel special. Hannibal answered the second ring, “Good afternoon, Will!” “Hey! I am at the harbor front and was thinking about you, so I thought I’d say hello…” “I would have called you if you didn’t. I miss you, Will.” Will sighed and smiled, *so good to just hear his voice.*

“Can we have dinner at my place tonight?” Hannibal asked him with hope in his voice. “Yes!” Will answered eagerly. “I... I mean, yes…” Hannibal chuckled, “I’m as excited as you are, dearest. I will be waiting for you. When do you think you can be at my place?” “8 pm, if it is okay for you?” “Perfect! I will have some time to prepare us something before you arrive. See you then, Love.” Will smiled as the call ended. Once he put his phone away, he looked up and saw Beverly’s grin. “Shut up!” “I didn’t say anything!” “But you were going to, Katz!” Beverly nudged him. “Someone’s got a D A T E…” Will rolled his eyes, but he felt happy. She gave him a cup of coffee and they drank in silence for a while. “So, when are you going to tell me what you think about our Mr Tier?” Beverly turned towards him. “You know me well, Beverly... The voice in my head is screaming loud and clear, it’s him.” “But we need actual proof. We can’t arrest him just coz you had a hunch. *Sigh*… How are we going to prove that this guy is the killer?” Beverly frowned. “Let’s see what Jack has to say about that.” “Not sure he will agree to do anything unless we bring him some tangible arguments.” Will nodded with a witty smirk, “Yeah, Jack’s… hard to please... more so during his cave bear crisis...”

Beverly drank the last mouthful of her coffee and said, “Come on, let’s go back to the office. I want to check if anything pops up about our guy. YOU need to go home early... and get ready for your date!” Will laughed, “Yeah... I… I guess I do…” Unknown to both of them, Randall Tier was watching them as they entered the car. He made note of Will’s number plate. *From one predator to another* , he thought, *you see me as I see you* , *Mister Graham.* He knew he wanted to pay a visit very soon to his new acquaintance. He will have to prepare. He loved the time he spent to tweaking his second skin as he called it. Randall imagined what it would be like to tear into Graham with those lovely fangs.

Solar Blast

Jack was still in very bad mood when they met him in the lab. “So how was your sunny day at the bay?” he told them bitterly as if they were there on a tourist trip. Will and Beverly looked at each other trying not to roll eyes in front of their boss. “Jack, I think I found our beast. I am convinced that it is Randall Tier, a guy who is working at the Maryland Science Center…” “Do you have anything else than your hunch for now?” Jack asked him, suddenly all business and in much better mood. “Not yet, Boss, but we are working on it…” “Work faster, we need something to bring him in as soon as possible. I trust your judgement on this, Will, and I believe that he will soon need another dose of savagery as he already seemed hooked on that.” “Yeah... I think so too... he seemed overly confident... almost playing game of cat and mouse with us... I don’t think he cares to be caught... the attraction is too strong now.” “So look what you can dig up on him. Maybe a precedent aggression, or a mental record, anything tangible will do.” “On it, boss!” Beverly answered when he left the lab. Price and Zeller have not piped word. They knew better than to tease the bear.

Two minutes to 5pm, Beverly literally dragged Will out of the lab. “Go!” “Kicking me out? Wow... some friend you are!” Will said, rolling his eyes. “I’m a very good friend. I want you to go home and shower. Then put on a little makeup and wear that little black dress with matching stilettos…” Will pulled away from Beverly’s grip. “I don’t wear makeup! Neither do I have a dress! Jeez, Bev!” “You know what I mean; go home and get ready for your date!” Will sighed. “Ok, ok... I’m going.” Beverly waved as Will drove away. Will didn’t like the feminized role that Beverly gave him, friends can be harsh in their way of caring sometimes. But Beverly was always there for him, especially after the disaster with Alana Bloom. And maybe he had to grudgingly admit that Beverly had better fashion advice. Will drove home thinking about Beverly’s words: *Wear that rust-coloured shirt and dark pants... you know you look hot in that, Will.* Will chuckled. When he arrived, the dogs gave him the welcome greetings as usual, and he first prepared their food. Then, he spent a good time in the shower and pruned his beard with care, maybe also as a counterpoint of Beverly’s words about dress and stilettos. When he finished looking at himself with satisfaction, he got dressed feeling happy like a teenager... alive.

It was good to care like this for someone, and to have someone who cared for you in return. Good to feel his arms around him, just thinking of him. For the first time, Will was so honest with what he wanted, with his feelings. It was like he had no choice to tell the truth, like he was carried away by a powerful wave... *Love?* He wondered. *Don’t know about the big picture, but I can’t deny that I AM IN LOVE... AND IT FEELS REALLY GOOD.* Ready to drive to Hannibal’s house and be right on time. The bright smile that found its way on his face didn’t leave him all the way. He almost didn’t have time to ring the bell before Hannibal opened the door. *Hannibal was waiting for him, he noted, of course, but it feels good, like coming home. Not the place, but the man,* he thought. But then all thoughts evaporated as Hannibal grabbed him bluntly and kissed him as if he wanted to suck the life out of him. Will

laughed in his mouth before succumbing to the impulse of desire. Soon they were only two bodies rubbing each other in a concerto of moans.

"If… this was… what you meant by... dinner, I should… come by… more often… oh god!" Will moaned as he felt Hannibal's hardness against his own groin. Hannibal stopped kissing Will, resting his forehead against his lover's. "Sorry, I... I promised food... and now I've gotten carried away... the things you do to me, Will…" Will laughed. "You too. I... don't be sorry about kissing me." Hannibal stepped back, "Dinner is waiting, Dear! Let's not have the dessert first... a good part of the pleasure is anticipation... And my desire for you is deliciously painful at the moment…" Will put his palm across Hannibal's mouth. "If you keep talking like that, I'll suck you off right here at your doorstep. Now, take me to the food!" Hannibal laughed "Yes, Dear." He linked his fingers with Will as they walked towards the kitchen. "Dinner is almost ready, if you be so kind to take the wine carafe to the table, I will bring the entries." Will took the wine and went to the dining room. The plates were set for them at the end of the big table with candles for a romantic dinner face to face. Hannibal brought their plates with his usual decorum "This is a Japanese delicacy that I had to pass an exam to be allowed to serve, I hope you'll like it... Fugu fish could be deadly if not prepared according to the rules."

Will sat back with a smile "Anything you cook is delicious, Hanni... I don't care what you serve, I'll eat it anyway!" Hannibal smiled back "You're very generous with your compliments, Darling." Hannibal poured them some Pinot Gris wine before he sat down. Will brought some fish to his mouth and time stopped for Hannibal as he watched him. Will trusted him entirely, it was like a pang in his heart. The last person who trusted him so fully and without question was his beloved Mischa. *I have found my soulmate,* Hannibal thought to himself. "What?" Will asked, chewing the fish. Usually, Hannibal would abhor such rudeness, but Will was so endearing. "Soulmate... I... I see you as my soulmate, Will Graham." Will blushed "Oh…" He continued to eat, keeping his eyes down. His cheeks and neck felt warm. The quality of the silence while they ate with lust fueled gazes to each other was a very playful and pleasurable tension, a promise of more... dessert. Once the entrees were done, Hannibal removed the plates and disappeared in the kitchen only to reappear with their next course.

"This is Foie de veau à la Lyonnaise… Liver with onions. I learnt this dish during my student days in France. It's a unique recipe from Lyon." Hannibal smiled seeing Will eye the dish hungrily. "It is amazing to see how much you invested in your culinary passion since very young." Will didn't wait for a reply, immediately digging into the meal. Hannibal was overjoyed, seeing Will eat the barista's liver. This ugly low life was now transformed in this beautiful moment he could share with his lover. *This is art in its purest form,* he thought, *Transformation of ugly and banal into the pleasure of the senses.* "Glad you're enjoying the meal, my dear. Cooking is my way of sharing love, I think. The Scene resonated profoundly in me from my early years, and the communion of souls through food was always

something meaningful for my understanding of humanity." Will's heart was thumping hard against his ribs. *He loves me! Hanni loves me! No one would go through so much trouble to cook for me like this!* "Thank you..." Will said softly, not sure if his voice was steady enough to convey his emotions. Hannibal reached out to take Will's hand in his. "Don't thank me. This is all for you…" Not being able to contain himself anymore, Will dropped his fork, got up from the table and pounced on Hannibal, kissing him hard. Hannibal turned his chair and soon Will was on his lap. They kissed slowly and languorously... Hannibal could taste the barista in Will's mouth.

Will was breathing heavily now, giddy like a teen after his first kiss. "I... I know you still need to serve dessert... but... god, Hanni! I can't wait anymore!" Hannibal himself was finding it hard to control his erection. "For once, my Dear… let's just skip dessert!" The way to Hannibal's bedroom was difficult as they couldn't stop kissing. Will leaned back against the wall by the stairs. "Would it be... rude... if I... if I sucked you off now... right here?" Hannibal chuckled, slipping his hands under Will's shirt. "Will Graham… you can suck me off anytime... anywhere..." Will fell on his knees looking up into Hannibal's eyes while his hands went for his zipper. Hannibal was shaking in anticipation, and Will liked to make him wait a little more. Very slowly, he pulled the zipper down. Hannibal breathed in deeply and passed his tongue over his lower lip. He groaned. "You're a tease, Will..." Will smiled, continuing his actions. Once the zip was opened, Will's fingers worked Hannibal's belt and let the pants slip down. He looked up at Hannibal with lust and put his mouth against the bump there, through the fabric of the underwear. Hannibal fell against the wall as he felt his knees too weak to support him anymore. Hannibal's cock was hard, dripping with precum.

"Dessert is served," Will said cheekily before taking Hannibal's length into his mouth. Hannibal's head hit the wall, his body jerking. Will's mouth worked around his cock so well. His tongue played under the rim of his cock head, sliding into the slot to collect his precum like if it was honey. Hannibal wanted Will to savour him and at the same time felt an urge to be swallowed. Never had anyone given him so much pleasure with something so animalistic. Will apparently wanted him to feel the pain of the need as well as the pleasure of his wet and hot mouth as he played him for a very long time. Rotating, licking and sucking, Will brought him very close, but then he stood up brushing his body along Hannibal's. Hannibal was panting and a nasty playful smile on Will's lips told him what was expected of him "Will... please... I can't…" Will pushed him on the stairs without a word, Hannibal almost fell hobbled by his pants.

Will worked his own belt watching him like a predator. "I can't bare my clothes anymore... I need to feel you…" They both undressed in a frenzy. Except the panting noises, it was all silence and awe. Their bodies intertwined on the stairs and contact of their burning skins was almost too much. Hannibal took Will's hand and put it on both of their cocks. Keeping his hand against his, Hannibal gave them a stroking movement while they kissed with renewed fervor. Will groaned in his mouth at the friction "Oh god!.. I'm not... not going to…" Will's

words were cut off by the intense wave of pleasure which shot through his body. His head fell back against the stairs as he gasped. Hannibal licked his neck and bit him strong enough for that to be painful without tearing the skin. It felt like electricity shot through Will, but the pain only made him feel the ecstasy. He felt his mind spiralling.

“No, not yet, Darling... I want to be inside you… to feel you when you cum.” Will locked his lustful gaze on Hannibal “Yes… Please…” Will was panting and gasped as Hannibal’s hand went down through his thighs and he felt Hannibal’s finger gently circling his hole. “What... the hell... are you... waiting for? A… a royal... invitation?” Will panted, his lungs burning as he sucked in more oxygen. Hannibal smiled, kissed Will’s nose, and said, “So... impatient…” He patiently worked him open, but pre-cum wasn’t enough and Will wasn’t in any state to walk to his bedroom. In a flash, Hannibal was out of his pants and running to the kitchen. Will looked at the back of his retreating lover “What. The. Fuck!.. Hannibal! Get back here!” Hannibal chuckled hearing the frustration in Will’s voice “Hold on, Darling! I‘ll be right back…” Will was left alone and had a big smile on his face. He laughed to himself. *Sex on the stairs! Oh god! Wait till Beverly hears this!* He thought to himself. Hannibal came back from the kitchen with the same big smile... and a bottle of extra virgin olive oil. Will laughed out loud. “Ready to marinate me, doctor?” Hannibal’s heart skipped a beat. “You’re such a lovely dessert… I need to savour you…” “Hanni, please stop talking and fuck me!” Will groaned, getting more impatient. Hannibal slowly unscrewed the cap of the bottle and poured the oil into his palm.

Using the fragrant oil, he prepared Will while he kept massaging Will’s groin. Will’s body jerked as he moaned. “Oh… you… I...I hate you… but...but your... hands…” Unable to resist, Hannibal leaned closer and kissed Will’s plush red lips. Will grabbed onto Hannibal’s shoulders, squeezing the shoulder blades. Next Hannibal prepared himself too, and then he pushed into Will slowly. His eyes never leaving Will’s. They both clung to each other, rocking back and forth. Will kept chanting “harder, harder” and Hannibal obliged his beautiful David. Oh, how he wished to draw this moment: those damp curls framing the pale angelic face, the ruby lips plump from kisses, the flush of Will’s naked skin, the ecstasy of pleasure. Like Bernini’s Saint Theresa, Hannibal felt a reverent adoration while thrusting into Will. This was communion of the souls as well as bodies. Hannibal got lost in his spiritual quest as the pleasure intensified for both of them. No more words, no more thoughts, just the rhythm of the waves of pleasure. Oblivious of the world. Hannibal will save this moment forever in his mind palace. When they came together at once, perfection was the only word resonating in his empty mind with the scream of his name by Will’s hoarse voice. While he tried to calm his rapid pulse, Hannibal felt as if this was the climax of his symphony. And now, as they laid on the stairs, this was the moment the conductor slowly raised his baton to mark the end.

When he felt strength returning to his limbs, Will slowly raised his hand and brushed the strands of hair on Hannibal’s forehead. “I… I love you, Hannibal… you don’t have to say it

back, I just wanted you to know…" Hannibal kissed Will passionately. "Will... my Dear Will… what I feel for you, I… love is hardly enough to describe it." Will blinked back in tears "I... how did I ever got so lucky? You're like... this... perfect guy, and I'm…" Hannibal shook his head "No, Will... it is I who's lucky." They snuggled in each other's arms on the stairs for a short while in a complicit silence. Their hearts beat at the same rhythm like never before as the tempest went down and the emotions took their toll. Finally Hannibal got up and extend his hand to Will " Let us go to bed, Love" Will took his hand and followed him to bed. He didn't remember anything else as soon as his head touched the pillow. Will's last thoughts as he drifted off to sleep was the warmth of Hannibal's body next to his, and Hannibal's arm around his waist.

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When Will opened his eyes the next morning, the first thing he saw was Hannibal's face gently smiling at him. Then he felt his hand caressing his hair like if he was in contemplation. "Good morning!" he said. Hannibal's smile went bigger "Good morning, beautiful!" He bent and tenderly kissed Will's mouth, neck, breast, belly. Will squirmed and giggled. *I want to wake up like this everyday,* he thought to himself. Once Hannibal was done kissing Will all over, he rose from the bed. "I'll get started on breakfast. Do come down when you're ready…" He put on his pyjama pants and went down. Will lizarded for a while in bed, smiling to himself, stretching in the silky sheets, feeling sore and paradoxically rejuvenated. *Being loved as this effect on us,* he thought. When he finally decided to get out of the large comfortable bed, Will stood and stretched again. He then looked around the room. Grinning, he walked up to one of the drawers and opened it. The first thing that caught his eye was a soft well-worn red cashmere. *I think I'll wear Hanni's sweater,* he said quietly, taking the sweater out and pulling it over his head. Will smoothened the sweater down his naked body. It was long enough to cover his groin, ending just above his knees. It had Hannibal's scent, warm and woody, like an embrace in his arms.

Will padded down the stairs, his nose breathing in the aroma of breakfast. *Yeah, I definitely want to wake up like this everyday!* When he was at the door of the kitchen, Hannibal turned his head with a grin "You are so lovely in my sweater, Will. Come here I want to eat you…" Will walked up to his lover flirtatiously, dragging his feet on purpose "I will eat you as well, doctor Lecter... if you let me take you back to bed…" Hannibal kissed him, gently first, then more purposefully, gently biting his lower lip. "Let me serve you breakfast first, it is almost ready." Hannibal turned back to the stove. Will sat down at the island, looking around the kitchen. He was amazed at the various items Hannibal had, as if he was a professional chef. Hannibal dished out the ham and eggs equally into two plates. Then he added some fruit to the plates and placed one in front of Will. "Something simple, but I hope nutritious enough." Will smiled. "Anything you cook is delicious, Hanni."

They ate and talked about Will's dogs, about Hannibal's divorce going well on its path. Hannibal told him that he wanted to be free to be with him. Will blushed and locked his gaze on him, tears threatening in his eyes. Hannibal returned his gaze with a warm smile,

conveying how serious he was in their relationship. Will wanted to reciprocate but didn't know yet how to demonstrate it in a meaningful way. So, he just stayed silent. Then they went on speaking of this and that, like if nothing particular happened. Will's mind was in turmoil, so many emotions to process. He let his gaze wander on the decoration in the kitchen. Hannibal was refined in every detail, so much different from himself, who could not be more indifferent to decorum as long as it was comfortable and practical. He looked at Hannibal, and was drown in the vision of his pulpy mouth.

Then he saw it. The corner of his eye caught a framed drawing on the wall. It looked like just another sketch from a random artist. But Will knew it was Hannibal's drawing. The picture made Will freeze in shock without knowing why. His attention went back to it. He scrutinized it for a few seconds without seeing anything particular... then it looked back at him and he saw them too. The eyes. The drawing was a classical display of a coffee plant. But there... among the leaves and beans, drawn like coffee beans was a pair of eyes. You would have to look very closely to see them, but there they were. The eyes from the coffee roaster. No one knew about the eyes, except Will and the forensic team... and Jack. *The only other person who would know, would be the one who put the eyes in the machine himself! Oh god!..* in Will's mind, the pieces started to fall in together. The murder of the TV Evangelist, the Barista... all those other victims before... organs missing… *"...liver with onions… a French recipe…"* Will dropped his fork onto the plate, his lungs ceasing to pump air, his heart almost bursting from within his ribcage.

Dark Side of the Moon

Hannibal looked at Will's wide eyes and saw the sudden realisation. *Ah, my David knows!* And Will saw as well that Hannibal knew he knew. Instantly, the tension was very high. Like two wild animals facing each other waiting for the other's attack. Seconds went by, then a minute, then several minutes. Nothing happened, tension went down just a little. Hannibal spurred "I don't want to rush you, Will. However, I need to know where you stand on the prospect of living together." *What?! What did he just say…* * Any capacity of reasoning just left Will. His blood grew cold. "I… erm...I need to… I need some time..." Hannibal took Will's hand in his. "Of course. Take as much time as you need." Nothing else was said on the matter, they went on with their breakfast, first in silence then exchanging on everything and nothing. Will could not quite stop glancing at Hannibal looking for something that wasn't there anymore - *the he knew I knew* , not sure he saw it in the first place anymore. But then, when he dared look back at the drawing again, they were still watching him, the barista's eyes.

After breakfast, Hannibal took them back in his bedroom and they made love again. Will wanted to forget what he saw, and what his brain was processing. But it never stopped, the images of the eyes... And soon flashes of human organs and plates of food kept running in a loop, like a film reel. But it didn't revolt him or disgust him enough to stop wanting the pleasure that Hannibal gave him at the same time. Not even for one instant, Hannibal was everything important in his life, and Will was determined to keep him there for the rest of his life, now that Hannibal showed him that prospect as serious. The world could go to hell, and Will with him, but Hannibal was his. Will had then made up his mind: he would keep Hannibal, no matter what. Now, all he had to do was keep Jack's attention away from Hannibal. Speaking of the devil, Jack called while they were coming out of the shower.

Will winced when he heard the particular ring on his phone. He had put Darth Vader's imperial march theme to recognize Jack's calls. That certainly said a lot about him, he smiled, looking at the inquisitorial gaze from Hannibal. "There has been another savage killing, Will. I need you to come to the crime scene right away. The science team is waiting for you, so you can have it fresh and undisturbed." "Good afternoon to you too, Jack..." Jack didn't even bother to notice "I'll text you the address now." He hung up, and Will thought he wanted something else in his life than to be treated like an unpleasant freak to be dealt with because he brought results. Between Hannibal's adoration and Jack's rebuff, it was beginning to look a lot less difficult to choose lately. Will threw the phone onto the bed, frustrated that his planned weekend with Hannibal was cut short. Hannibal embraced his lover, kissing his shoulder. "I'm afraid I've left our clothes from last night in the laundry room. It's probably best I lend you something to wear for now."

Will grinned, then laughed. “Yeah... you’d love to have me wearing something of yours, wouldn’t you?” Not waiting for an answer, Will turned in Hannibal’s arms and hugged him. He inhaled Hannibal’s natural scent, mixed with the expensive shampoo and soap he used. In fact, Will used them too but somehow they smelt different on Hannibal’s skin, more woody, and he loved that. *Who knew soap came in flavours and had ridiculous names,* Will thought. Eventually, they both got dressed. Hannibal in a soft blue shirt and grey pants, while Will was given a similar pair of pants but in navy blue. Hannibal lent Will a light blue shirt. They were slightly too big on him, not too much, but just enough so his colleagues would know he was wearing his lover’s clothes. Hannibal’s shoulders were broader than Will’s, and obviously all Hannibal’s clothes were tailored. Besides, this was exactly what Hannibal wanted; a way to mark his territory. Will knew it, and it should bother him, but it didn’t. It should worry him that it didn’t, he knew, and pushed the thought deep inside for another time.

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Will and Hannibal kissed just before Will got into his car. He really didn’t want to leave, but his job had to come first. He also needed to keep the others distracted from the Ripper case - especially now that Will had realised who he was. Will glanced at his phone again to read the address. Then he started his car, waved to Hannibal, and drove off. On the way, he thought of Jack and Beverly, of his job at the FBI. How he had been naive to believe that he was making a difference solving violent crime cases to help put predators behind bars. Now, he just seemed to be Jack Crawford’s glorified bloodhound; the FBI Freak who thinks like criminals. *I hate that!* Will sighed as he turned the corner, leading up to the crime scene. He parked some distance away from the forensic van. He got out and glanced around. Jack seemed to be busy on the phone with someone, so he didn’t notice Will had arrived. Beverly on the other hand waved him over.

“Glad you’re here... Jack’s been... WHOA! Look at YOU!” Beverly made Will do a little turn. “Nice. Very nice. Brings out your eyes, Will.” Will felt his cheeks turn warm. “Yeah, Hanni thinks that too.” - “Hanni?” Will nudged her arm. “Shut up... ok, so…” Beverly pointed towards the house, “Better prepare yourself, this is really the worst crime scene I’ve ever seen…” They walked together to the porch, the print of a bloody hand was on the door lintel. The fingers facing outward. “Someone marking his hunting spot?” Beverly remarked. “But the fingers point outward... I think this was made by someone who escaped... Or tried to…” Will frowned at the print. Then he shrugged and walked into the house. Immediately, the coppery smell of dried blood filled his nostrils. The living room was a mess of broken glass, damaged furniture, beer bottles, and blood splatters. At least two bodies laid sprawled on the floor.

Will could also see body parts scattered randomly, a savage killing. The beast had a big feast out of college kids too drunk or too high, judging from the white powder left in lines on a

tray, to be able to resist him. The luxury house meant that Jack would be pressured more than usually to get the killer, which also meant he will be worse than he usually is with the rest of them. Will of course recognized the work of Randall Tier immediately, and he already told about him to Jack. This should not have happened. They knew who he was, they just couldn't find anything to cage him for good. This felt like the last stand of a cornered predator who knew he would eventually be caught, but was so hooked that he could only rush the spiral down.

Will found a corner in the room to stand and close his eyes. *I enter the house of my prey. He is the first one I attack. I tear into his face first, then his torso. I let my inner beast out of its cage, allowing the beast to avenge a wrong. Once I'm done, I go for the next prey. Another weak animal, too weak to fight back. Easy prey. What a glorious hunt! I bite, rip, tear... I thirst for blood. More, I want more…* Will is startled back to the present by an arm on his shoulder. "Will? Hey... you were... it seemed like you were having a panic attack…" Beverly's worried face made him blink several times. Will then realised there were tears rolling down his cheeks. "I... the first victim... he...he knew the boy... I don't know how... but...but he... Randall knew him. That's why the kid's face was ripped!" Beverly rubbed Will's back as Will's breath slowed. "Ok...ok… Just keep breathing, Will…" Jack was behind them and heard what Will said "This bastard works in a museum where a lot of kids come for class trips. Just thinking of this beast among children makes my blood boil... We should be able to get the museum to let us watch their security videos, maybe we find out something there."

Then he asked Beverly to leave and retreat, showing Will that he wanted more information, no he demanded more information. How Will was affected by the scene and what unfold in his imagination was not something that bothered him. He had a killer to nail. Will sighed and let the pendulum swing again. *More blood, more... oh the weak animals are screaming. Pathetic! I am the King of Beasts! When this spoiled kid mocked my work at the museum, I couldn't wait to feel the sticky wetness of his shredded guts on my mouth. I look down on the lifeless animal and feel triumphant. This is more than my reckoning, this is my revelation to the world! The others... all those other weak things… they will feel my power too. I want them to scream before me, the beast who sits at the top of the food chain. An ode to my glory…* The thought seemed to stop in Will's mind as only images now flashed rapidly. The beast had snapped to a more animalistic behavior than ever before in his two previous crime scenes. Will noticed some traces of cocaine on the ruins of the first victim's face. Certainly as the predator enjoyed to smell the blood and the terror of his prey, he had got some of it too. But not enough at first to get him high... but he got more with each victim. That could explain the extent of the killing. Drug could have made him more physically enduring.

"He made a mistake" Will said, looking around for something tangible. "He... he did something different... something not from his normal instinct... there...there was… I think he involuntarily sniffed cocaine." Price stared at Will. "You mean... this animal-guy got high

before killing people?" Will shook his head. "No... he... the cocaine was... was during the... the kill... from... from people in the room... I…" He showed the tray with cocaine traces still on the coffee table. "The kids were high and were sniffing when he surprised them." Zeller gently lifted the arm of one of the victims on the floor then. "Hey guys! This looks like teeth marks… Human teeth marks!" Beverly looked over Zeller's shoulder. "I guess this was his mistake." She looked to Will, who gave a slight nod. Jack had a big grin "We got this son of bitch!" He slapped Will's back like a proud father congratulating his son. Will however didn't see it that way; it seemed like Jack only wanted results and nothing more, not caring how Will got them or what it did to Will's mental state. He envisioned how the beast, carried away by the blood and cocaine frenzy, had lowered his mask to bite his victims directly and tasted their blood in his mouth with delight. Nothing will stop him now, the addiction was too far gone.

Beverly tugged Will's sleeve. "Come on. Let's go pay Tier a visit. We probably have cause and some strong evidence." "He won't be taken in so easily. He's a predator, Bev." Beverly nodded. "At least he won't be on the run for long now. God, I can't imagine what those kids' parents would be going through now!" Will agreed half-heartedly, his mind still wondering about Randall Tier's change of pattern. Unknown to both of them, they were being watched by the beast from a distance. Randall was seated in his car. After his magnificent killing he found himself running into the woods nearby. He was not sure if he actually bayed at the moon, or if it was only in his imagination. When he woke up, he was laying on the grass at the foot of a big tree. He had to re-orientate himself to know where he was and to find the way to his car. He was resting in his car when he heard a big tumult. Neighbors were coming alarmed to discover the magnificent scene of his becoming. He knew that the hunters will follow, he just had to wait for them. And so, he was observing Will and Beverly when they went to Will's car.

Randall started his own car and followed them from a distance. He rapidly understood that they were going to the Maryland Science Center where he was working. He knew the place and while they were stuck in the traffic at the entrance of the public parking, he parked in the rear in the employees only parking. He left his beast skin in the car, but his clothes were covered in blood and dirt. He quickly entered the back door and ran towards the changing room. It was deserted at this hour as his colleagues were already at their posts to welcome the visitors. He stripped rapidly and grabbed some clothes he found in his colleague's locker. He put on his white lab coat and went directly to the lab where he was working to prepare the next exhibition on prehistoric predators. From where he stood, he could look out to the exhibition area. He saw Will and the woman he was with earlier, talking to Janice. Randall hoped Janice hadn't seen him enter the Centre yet. He didn't want a confrontation here, he'd rather hunt them later at his own pace. But he was prepared, should they decide to attack him here. Last night's glory was still pumping his blood faster, and he felt invincible. He saw them when they were walking towards his lab.

Randall was ready to pounce if ever his new hunter wanted to fight. The door opened and Janice led the two agents into the lab. “He must be in here... he’s always in the lab... he loves the fossils...” Will entered the room and could smell it right away, the coppery smell of blood. His gaze met Randall’s gaze, and they both knew the ruse was up. Randall took a paw with claws from the table in front of him and rushed to the door. Will bent in time to avoid the blow, but Beverly behind him wasn’t so lucky and took its full force on the temple. Randall attacked again while Beverly hit the door and slid down unconscious. Janice didn’t have time to understand or to scream before her throat was lacerated by claws that didn’t kill for centuries. Will managed to pull Randal back before he could kill Janice with the claws. Randall and Will began to struggle, both crashing into various displays and bones. Randall roared like a wild animal with a feral grin. Will glared back, he was not amused by Randall’s display. He felt that he was the main predator in the room, not Randall. When Randall threw Will off of him, the claw dropped from his hand.

Will got up again and pounced on Randal, using his bare hands to beat him. Randall laughed while Will was beating him, a crazy laugh like he was out of it. Will straddled Randall, punching his face over and over again. In Will’s mind, Randall’s face began to morph into various people from his past: a bully from his high school, his rude neighbour back in Louisiana, someone from the police force who always made him do midnight patrols, and now the face of Jack Crawford. This last face made Will stop in shock. When Will pulled his bloodied fists back, he stared at the dead eyes of Randall Tier. His fingers shook as he touched Randall’s neck, feeling for a pulse. There was none. He got up panting, and looked at Beverly and the Museum’s employee who was choking on her blood and watched him in terror. Will limped towards Beverly as she was slowly blinking awake. “Will? Oh… oh god!” Will frowned. “Bev? You ok?” Beverly wobbled as she stood up. Then she grabbed Will by the shoulders. “Will! You’re... you’ve been stabbed!” Will blinked back. “Wha…”

Then all at once, the shock of killing Randall Tier began to fade out. And Will felt an immense pain in his side. Looking down his own body, he noticed something protruding out from his right side, just below the last rib. He staggered as Beverly quickly caught him before he fell. As Will was gently laid on the ground, he felt his limbs grow weak. His eyelids grew heavy. He heard snippets of conversations, Beverly’s frantic voice telling him to stay awake. Footsteps rushing in and out of the area. Then Will let the cloud of darkness embrace him whole.

Moon Orbiting The Sun

Chapter Notes

> My bad for this late delivery of chapter 23, particularly delicious and long to make up for it, enjoy! Elefant

Hannibal sadly watched as Will drove away. Last night was wonderful, as they both made love on the stairs. It would have seem so raw and animalistic, but to Hannibal it was beautiful. The sounds of Will's moans once again music to his ears. Then at breakfast, the moment Will saw the drawing on the wall, Hannibal felt his heart stop. This would be the moment of truth: would Will put all the pieces together and surrender Hannibal to the FBI? Or, would Will decide to join Hannibal in his own realm of darkness? He'd dare not predict the outcome, for Will was always full of surprises. He casually broached the subject of moving in together. Will had said he needed time to think. Perhaps this was Will's way of saying he needed to contemplate his next move. Reluctantly, Hannibal had to admit that he needed an alternative plan. Should Will decide to have him arrested, Hannibal would have to kill his beloved David - even though killing Will would completely shatter Hannibal. He couldn't risk being arrested and rotting in prison, or much worse being sent to the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. He decided to take the chance and wait, just to see what Will would do next. He knew he was putting his life at risk, but his David was worth even this ultimate sacrifice.

Then Will received an angry phone call from Jack Crawford. Hannibal was almost sure that Will would probably confess everything to Jack as soon as they meet at the crime scene. Hence, once Will drove off, Hannibal busied himself in his office. He began to make plans to run. He did plan to visit Italy again, especially Florence. While he browsed on his tablet, looking up apartments in the Italian city, his phone kept buzzing. When he'd finally had enough of the ring tone, he reluctantly picked up. "What is it, Bedelia?" Chilton's voice answered instead. "Hannibal! Hello. I...I just want a few minutes of your time…" Hannibal sighed. He was in no mood to talk to Frederick. He hadn't heard from him, nor Bedelia since the divorce papers were signed. "You're wasting my time, Frederick... do hurry up!" Chilton then went on talking about how Bedelia's birthday was coming up and he was wondering if Hannibal had any idea of a perfect gift. Hannibal cursed internally. He never bothered about his ex wife's birthday all these years. "I don't know... and frankly, I don't care. Perhaps she would like something expensive that might cost you your house." Hannibal said sarcastically, but Frederick didn't seem to understand the frustration in Hannibal's voice. Instead, he laughed. "Oh, Hannibal! You have such a wonderful humour!"

Rolling his eyes, Hannibal wanted to hang up very much. Instead, he let Frederick ramble on and then the call finally ended. Sighing, Hannibal turned his attention back to his tablet. Just as he was about to book an apartment in Florence, his phone buzzed again. Cursing Chilton and Bedelia in French, Hannibal grabbed the phone, without looking at the screen, and almost shouted, “This had better be important!” The voice on the other end was frantic. “H...hello? Dr Lecter, right?” “Yes, this is Dr Lecter...” The female caller sighed in relief. “Hi... we’ve...we’ve never met... I’m Beverly Katz. I work with Will Graham. I... there’s been an attack... and... Will’s been admitted to John Hopkins. I... I just thought you should know…” Hannibal’s heart stopped, but not his thinking “I’ll be right there.” He hung up, grabbed his car keys and drove too fast to the hospital. On the way, he was thinking again about a life with Will, here or anywhere, and nothing without him made any sense. Will was already a part of him, he had to live.

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The stag was magnificent in the sunbeams piercing through the branches of the trees. Not far, he heard the chanting stream of a river, and birds. So peaceful, so serene, he wanted to stay laying on the moss, just listening, just breathing. And for a while, he just did. Then, he heard a movement in the bushes nearby, the creature walked slowly in his direction, and stayed at a distance watching him with an engaging smile. It was tall and all dark, with antlers that it wore like a crown, majestic. Despite the strangeness of his otherworldly appearance, Will realized somehow that it wasn’t a threat and smiled back at it. The creature approached in complete silence, slowly as not to scare a fierce animal. As if to mollify one of his stray dogs, Will spoke softly to it with words he did not hear but felt. He wanted to sit down and invite the creature to come to him, but he felt a sharp pain in his right side. The creature understanding his intention, walked the distance in a flash and came to sit on the moss next to him. It stretched out his black and emaciated arm, and caressed his hair gently. First surprised and tensed by the gesture, Will relaxed under the caress.

Will tentatively opened his eyes in his hospital bed, Hannibal was seated on his bed, watching him tenderly, his warm hand stroking among his hair curls. He had been speaking to him he realized, but in words he didn’t understand even if he knew their general meaning, love and adoration. And it felt so good, that he just smiled back and stayed in silence enjoying the caress for a while as time stopped and eternity opened its gates for them once more. “...and there he is, those beautiful blue eyes, like sapphires reflecting the sun’s rays…” Hannibal’s baritone voice made Will feel warm and comfortable, even though there was still a sharp pain in his right side. Will slowly blinked and looked up at his lover’s face. “Hey…” he croaked, his throat parched. Then a straw was placed near Will’s lips and Will sipped the cool water. He wanted to sit up but felt a hand on his shoulder. “No, Will... be still. Don’t pull those stitches open again.” “Again?” Will frowned. “Yes... after we stitched you up and stopped the bleeding, you reopened the wound again when you were thrashing from a nightmare.” Before Will could ask Hannibal anything more, there was a knock on the door.

“Hey! I... I’m not interrupting, am I?” Beverly stood at the door, a small bandage on her forehead. “Not at all, Ms Katz. Do come in. You can keep my Will company while I do my round.” Hannibal squeezed Will’s shoulder to convey his love and stood up inviting Beverly into Will’s room. She waited until Hannibal left before she playfully smacked Will’s arm. “Ouch! Hey, I’m wounded here!” “I know! Jeez, Will... you scared the shit outta me! There was... you were just bleeding out... that was one big-ass tiger tooth… and I... I was still too dizzy to even help you!” “Guess... Randall had a bone to pick with me…” Beverly smacked Will’s arm again. Then they both laughed. They were still alive and had the privilege to enjoy it and communicate that very feeling as only survivors can. Beverly went on to tell him about how, despite her training at the FBI academy, she felt helpless seeing Will bleed out. And there was also Randall Tier’s colleague Janice who was choking on her blood. Beverly had screamed for help while fumbling with her phone to call an ambulance. Once the ambulance arrived, she managed to search Will’s pockets for his phone. She called Hannibal as soon as Will was loaded into the ambulance.

She told him how Hannibal took everything in hands when they arrived and how protective he was of Will. He offered to treat Will himself. He did all the surgical intervention on him, and he didn’t even allow the nurse to change the bandages. “Hot doctor aside, this one’s a keeper, Will. Don’t let him go.” Beverly squeezed Will’s fingers. Will squeezed back. “No... I… I love him, Bev. I don’t think I can ever let Hannibal go…” “I am so happy for you, Will, for both of you.” Beverly smiled tenderly, smile quickly replaced by a playful grin “No brother, cousin you could present me with?..” - “Not that I know of…” Will teased back. Then, they spoke about the investigation. Jack was really relieved that Randall Tier was unable to harm anyone anymore. The pressure of the college kids’ families took a political direction with the Maryland Senator calling him personally, demanding progress on the investigation. It was a demand for blood, the savagery of the killings was too big to allow the civilised varnish to stick anymore.

Of course, nobody said a word, but it was clear for everyone. So when the news came that Will killed the beast, he instantly became the hero of the FBI. His face was on TV screens for 24 hours. His hour of glory in public opinion. Janice had her say too, when she responded to many journalists who wanted to know how Special Agent Graham saved her and the other agent from the claws of the beast. Her emotions were very convincing on screens all over the country. She even went so far as called him an “angel sent by god almighty to save them”. Of course, news channels loved that kind of heroic events so they transmitted the information in a loop until another bloody event took over. “I think they might give you a medal, Will... for being so brave...” Beverly teased Will. Will groaned. “Oh, please! The medal may as well go to Jack for being such a grumpy bear about the case.” They shared a laugh again. But every time Will laughed, he felt a stab of pain in his side. Beverly saw him hold his side and noticed the light sheen of sweat on his forehead. “You’re in pain, aren’t you? No need to act all macho, Will. Just tell me…” “I’m ok... I am... the pain isn't that bad…”

“Perhaps, our... hero... needs to rest, Ms Katz. I don’t mean to chase you out, but...” Beverly stood up from the side of Will’s bed. “No! Yeah, I get it! Will needs all the rest he can get. It was nice meeting you, Dr Lecter…” “Please, call me Hannibal…” Beverly grinned. “Only if you call me Beverly…” They shook hands and Hannibal came to sit on Will’s bed again, his hand going straight to Will’s hair as if he needed to reassure himself touching his lover alive. Will closed his eyes, enjoying the physical contact as well. He was building his courage to speak. He knew it was maybe the most important moment of his life. He didn’t trust himself so well with words, but it had to be done so they both knew where they stood. “I love you. I still love you, even after knowing about… what you did... what you’re still doing…” Hannibal’s eyes widened a fraction before he masked his emotions. “Will, my dear… you’ve just recovered from surgery...” - “No! I want you to know. I...I’m not going to tell Jack... or anyone… You’re mine, Hanni. No one else can have you.” For once, Hannibal didn’t have the words to speak, so he just lost his gaze in Will’s, full of adoration and love. His hand came ever so lightly to Will’s cheek, he bent over and kissed him reverently. “I love you, Will Graham. I never thought I could love again like that but you didn’t give me the choice. And I love you even more for that.” He kissed him again more deeply and Will responded with the same fervor.

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One week later, Will was allowed to leave the hospital under the expressed condition that he stayed with Doctor Lecter and under his care. So Will found himself in Hannibal’s bed and care despite his will to go home to attend to his dogs. He had to make a very convincing call to Beverly, who laughed and said, “Ok, Will… I’ll babysit your babies while you and your Doctor do the dirty!” “Shut up!” Beverly laughed harder, then pretended to talk to his dogs, “Hey guys! Your Daddy’s busy getting laid...don’t worry, Aunty Bev will take good care of you.” Will sighed. “Why am I friends with you anyway?” “Because I’m awesome and you know it, Graham!” ”Yeah, sure! Whatever, Bev… Thank you…” “You are welcome. Just take good care of yourself, and your pack will be happy to see you when you are up to come home again. Oh, and Will? I know you’re a responsible adult… but make sure you always use a condom...don’t want you to get pregnant...” Will cursed back, and hung up when he heard Beverly laugh at him.

Hannibal sat by Will’s bed, shamelessly listening to the conversation. “She’s a good friend, Will. I’m glad someone will be there for you when I cannot be.” Will took Hannibal’s hand and squeezed it interrogatively, “What do you mean?..” “Will, I never intended to live so long to tell the truth. I’ve always found the idea of death comforting. The thought that my life could end at any moment frees me to fully appreciate the beauty and art and horror of everything this world has to offer. As you now know, I could be arrested and thrown in jail or worse rot in a lunatic asylum…” “Never! Hannibal, I will never permit that, I will better kill you, kill us both! Please, don’t speak like that… You never gave us any indication of suicidal tendencies, on the contrary you were always very meticulous, never leaving a single trace…” Hannibal smiled at the vehemence of Will’s speech, yet he still noticed the double allegiance demonstrated by the use of the “us” on both sides. He knew that Will’s life was going through a revolution moment by the force of his love for him. He could not adore him more at this very instant. His heart was pounding hard in his chest.

In symbiosis, Will reacted by putting his hand against his heart and left it there while his face lift up demanding the reassurance of another kiss. “I am not suicidal, Will, and you gave me all the more reasons to live and to be even more careful to not be caught…” - “I know, Hannibal... I know that you can’t stop and I am not asking this from you. I know… what you are, what you do… Why you do it. But I would never want you to be caught, or… or taken away. If you decide to die, take me with you…” Will’s request seemed like an obsession, but to Hannibal it was like a marital vow *till death do us part.* They kissed again to seal those tacit wishes. A very slow and profound kiss in which your souls play a more active role than your tongue. When they finally emerged from it, Hannibal asked again what Will thinks about moving here with him permanently. They both knew that was the inevitable next step and there were material contingencies to take care of to prepare for it. Will of course said yes to moving in, but on the condition that he could bring along his dogs. Hannibal laughed: his bachelor-home would now be a family-home, with his soulmate and seven ‘children’! “The yard is certainly too small for them, but we can spend all our weekends at a house I have not far from here. It is on top of a cliff, and it is rocked by the sound of the ocean waves at its foot. You will love to spend the evening in the fresh marine air and fall asleep in this house like a boat above the ocean. There is quite enough space for your pack to explore too.” Hannibal was happy and voluble. A smile hung on his face permanently.

Will’s eyes widened, then he threw his arms around Hannibal, hugging him. Hannibal accepted him, wholly. His strange mannerisms, his dogs, his empathy, his love for fishing… everything! *I never want to let him go,* Will thought. “Tell me more about this mysterious cliff house. Is it like your quiet haven, when you want to escape from the world?” Will asked, then grinned and teased Hannibal further, “Or, perhaps you have a harem of pretty boys there who entertain you at night?” Hannibal pulled Will closer, kissing him soundly. “I would never need a harem of young men, when I can have you Will Graham.” Then Hannibal proceeded to kiss Will all over, deliberately nibbling on sensitive skin since he knew Will was ticklish. Will laughed and squirmed, but didn’t pull away even if his right side remembered him with a flash of pain. Hannibal sensed it and looked at him. “It’s ok, just a little pain when I move too fast… don’t stop,” Will said, and Hannibal obeyed. He explored every part of skin he found with reverent adoration, slowly, with care. Will was burning alive, moaning - a symphony for him again.

They surfed the waves of time, forgotten by the rest of the world. Hannibal nailed his hips on the mattress with both hands and took him in his mouth. It was too much for Will. He fought to arch his back and Hannibal’s hands that made sure he couldn’t risk to strain the stitches. His body tension was painful itself and just balanced by the pleasure of Hannibal’s mouth around him. Will forgot everything; about the cases, the Ripper, Jack, even the fact that he had beaten Randall Tier to death. He just basked in the pleasure Hannibal gave him, enjoying every minute of it as it was burning his very core. He cumed in a loud scream, a purifying one in which he expulsed all the remains of his frustrations, of his doubts. As he caught his breath, Will looked towards Hannibal, watching him swallow. “I probably taste of medicine

and stuff…" Will chuckled. Hannibal just smiled. "You taste heavenly, Beloved… perhaps with a bit of chocolate sauce you would taste nicer…" Will laughed then playfully tugged Hannibal's ear. "Chocolate sauce, huh? If I didn't know any better, I'd say you have a food-kink, Hanni." Hannibal's answer was to place butterfly kisses on Will's stomach. They fell asleep, Hannibal spooning Will protectively.

Dark Moon Light

The week went too fast. Hannibal went to the hospital early for his scheduled surgeries and came back home as soon as possible, trying to spend together as much time as possible. It was easy and comfortable to live as a couple. Will was not such a demanding partner like Bedelia had been. In the meantime, Will was dodging Jack's numerous phone calls about cases. It was as if Jack had no concept of 'recuperation'; he knew for a fact that Will was still recovering but kept on calling Will to consult over the phone. Even Will's students at the Academy knew not to disturb him, and his classes were covered by Alana and another lecturer. Will had half a mind to just block Jack from his phone, but realised that if he did that, Jack might just show up at Hannibal's house. In the long term, he knew he had to keep working with Jack if only to protect Hannibal. So at the end of the week, he called Beverly to learn what was cooking there.

Beverly welcomed him like a lost child, "Will, so nice of you to remember your OLD colleagues! I understand that you've been enjoying your married life a lot with your HOT and HANDSOME doctor, but here it's been pretty much the same… Jack being very difficult as usual and more so because you didn't answer his phone calls..." Will rolled his eyes. "Yeah, thanks for the sarcasm! Jeez!" Beverly laughed. "Sorry, but I love winding you up! Anyway, Jack's been pacing the lab floor this morning wondering why you're ignoring him." Will sighed. "I'm still in recovery, Bev. Does he not know that?" "Oh, you know Jack… you're like his favourite toy… and now that you're not here, he's throwing tantrums." In the background, Will heard Price and Zeller laugh. Then he heard the two men shout, "HI WILL!" and realised Beverly put him on speaker. Will smiled to himself. Maybe he wasn't so lonely after all, since he had a few friends from work thinking about him. "What's this new case about anyway?" Beverly sighed, "...it's kinda… tormented…" "Is it ever simple?.." Will teased. "Some people were killed after leaving nightclubs. With the first victim, we thought it was a drunken fight gone wrong, but now we already have three cold bodies all with similar wounds. From what we understand so far, our unsub has been using the same MO…" "Tell me…" Will said, suddenly more interested. "The guy seems to follow his victims from gay nightclubs, and waits at a deserted area to attack them from behind. He cuts their throats, guts them, and mutilates their genitals. I mean… sounds like homophobic hate-crimes to me..."

However Will was trying to imagine the whole scene, but couldn't since he was not at the crime scene. "Hey, Bev? Could you like… email me some of the crime scene photos? Don't tell Jack anything though…" Beverly giggled. "Sure… but not all of them… just the ones I think might help your wonderful imagination." "I don't promise you anything, but I will have a look…" "Okay, as long as you don't exhaust yourself too much. Promise me you will recover before you come back to work, Will." "Don't worry, Bev, I will. But I need something to keep me busy while my HOT and HANDSOME doctor is working." He laughed and Beverly joined him in concert. "Ok, speak to you soon if I see something in the pictures, bye." Will laid in bed for a moment thinking about Beverly and their easy

camaraderie. It was still true, it was still a facet of him. He still wanted to save lives, but first Hannibal's life was a priority. For the rest, he will do his job to the best of his capacity as always, even more so now that he has this heaven with Hannibal, where he can recharge when the world has drained him with horrors.

His phone beeped and the email from Beverly with pictures was coming in. Will reached for Hannibal's tablet and decided to log into his email account. One by one, as the pictures began to download, Will stared at them. There was something there in the background which nagged at him. *What am I missing? Why is he doing this? All those guys were rather handsome ...So I follow them... because I want them…* "I want them!" Will said out loud. "I want them, I desire them… but it's wrong… why is it wrong?" Will frowned hard, trying to wonder what the killer was thinking about. This wasn't just another homophobic crime. He looked closely at the photos of the mutilations; the cuts and bruising had a certain pattern. *The mutilations had a ritual aspect and valor of a statement. Rightness in the mind of the killer of what was wrong with them... but merely with himself.* Sighing, Will rubbed his tired eyes. He knew that the killer will not stop until caught. Three victims, but the killer was still eaten alive by his devils. His sexual frustration will not let him rest.

Looking at the photos again, Will then realised that the bodies were positioned in a particular way. *Why are they bent like that?.. He needed them to be prosterned… Worshipping?.. Worshipping the killer?..* The traces of blood on the pavement showed that the victims have been moved on purpose. *Why did he move them?.. In a particular direction as it was not the direction of the streetwalk… They seem to be facing…* Will slowly got up from the comfortable sofa, and walked towards Hannibal's writing table. He searched the drawers, hoping to find a compass. Finding a shiny, fancy and functioning one, Will took out the compass and walked back to the sofa. He held up the tablet, still showing the photos and opened Google map on half of the screen. *North east? What's north east of the alley?* But then he realized that the three crime scenes showed the same direction globally without any particular area except north-east… *the direction of Mecca in Baltimore!* That was it! The killer had to be a muslim… Inhabited by the detestation of homosexuality but at the same time tormented by his own sexual attraction to other men. Will felt disgust. Those three young men were killed because of a brainwashing ideology; which also wanted their followers to believe that the earth was flat. Will had no sympathy for religion in general, but he was particularly upset by the the claim of some religious groups to impose their retarded way of life on others through terror and violence.

Picking up his phone, he dialled Beverly's number. He realised that if he called Quantico, Jack might know and call him over and over again. But it might save the life of the next killer's prey so it has to be done. "Bev, I think that our killer is a muslim guy…" "What? What makes you think so?" Will swallowed, hating the whole nature of the crime. "...he's struggling with his sexuality. He wants to… he's attracted to guys, but at the same time believes it's wrong. He places the bodies in the direction of Mecca in a position of prayer…

to absolve them of what he sees as a deviant behavior… or to convert them somehow after death, put somehow on the right track.... They need to pray and perform this… this ritual. This is a way to be absolved of what he perceives as his impurity...” Will was now pacing Hannibal’s office, phone to his ear and his other hand holding his side as it twinged from the pull of the stitches. Beverly interrupted him. “Whoa, whoa! Slow down, Will! So… you’re saying this guy is killing them because it’s against his religious beliefs?” “Something like that… at the same time, he’s also in denial about his own sexuality…” “Do you want to talk to Jack?” “No, and I rather not…” “Will, it will have more weight if he hears it from your mouth, and…” Beverly’s words were cut off and suddenly Will heard a familiar gruff voice. “Will? Whatever you have, give it to me!”

Shit! Will cursed silently. “Oh… hey Jack…” “So what did you see?...” “Oh, you know…” “Yes, I know that you STILL work on my team. WHAT I don’t know is why you felt the need to secretly contact Beverly, while I tried to call you several times without you answering.” “Jack… I am still recovering…” “Don’t give me that crap! Laying in bed doesn’t stop you from thinking and we need your head here, Will.” “And you have it, Jack.” “Good! Now let me hear what you found out…” Will wanted to just throw his phone across the room. He hated it when Jack tried to bully him like this, and at the same time make him feel guilty for not helping. So he explained his reasoning and arguments based on the pictures he had received from Beverly. Jack grunted on the other end of the line. “You should find a match in the fingerprints database of Immigration…” Will heard Jack sigh heavily, “Well, it will not be easy to get the authorisation to search the Immigration database. Since Obama and Holder decided to keep it separate from the FBI database, we will have to go through an administrative loop before we can be authorized to search there… What you are telling me, Will, is not politically correct...” Will was pissed. “I tell you what the evidence tell me, Jack! I don’t care for political games…” “You should. The present administration’s witch hunt is the reason why islamic-related crimes are often not reported or ignored by law enforcement… to avoid being seen as racist or labeling muslims as a violent group. If you remember, we have a muslim director at the FBI. You’ve put me in a difficult position. I would certainly prefer to avoid any political controversy. Something this serious is not what the hierarchy wants to hear.”

The silence on both sides was telling a lot about the political pressure on Jack’s shoulders. Nothing to stop him from trying to do his job, but still he didn’t need that kind of nonsense, like protecting killers from the law because of religious dogma. “I’m not saying you should start a damn Holy War, Jack! I am just telling you what I saw. You know as well as I do that it could save lives… We need to stop that guy as soon as possible before he kills again. And he will, Jack! You wanted my help, I gave you my help. Sometimes I wonder if all this is even worth it… Being your bloodhound and helping you catch your prey. I’ve got a life, Jack… and I hate it that you try to make it revolve around you!” Will hung up before Jack could add anything. He was still upset about his conversation with Jack when Hannibal came home later that evening. As he sat down to dine with his lover, Will found himself pushing the food around his plate with his fork. “Is the food not to your liking, Love?” Hannibal’s voice startled him. “I… sorry, it’s just…” “Are you in pain?” Will shook his head. “No. I’m fine.

I… they needed help with a case, and Bev sent some photos… and Jack started some crap about being politically correct and it was all bullshit really…" Will grumbled, running his fingers through his messy curls. "Damn! I need a haircut!" Hannibal chuckled. "Shall I take you to my hairstylist tomorrow? You could use a little pampering on my expense."

Will smirked. "Treating me to a spa too, Hanni? Wow! I feel like Julia Roberts in Pretty Woman now." Hannibal rolled his eyes. "You are far from a call-girl, Will. Now, jokes aside, what is really upsetting you?" "Well… I can't accept that the FBI isn't doing everything they can to arrest that killer because they don't want to seem islamophobic. Political correctness and pressure are now tying the hands of law enforcement and it's absolutely wrong! You know, I… I kinda get why you do what you do, Hanni. I mean… you're not like a vigilante, but… but you… what you do to these… these animals… these ugly, horrible, creatures… you make them art…" Hannibal took Will's hand in his, kissing Will's knuckles. "Flattery." Will tugged his hand, but Hannibal gripped it harder. "I'm not flattering you. I'm just saying that… I guess now I understand why you decided to do what you do. It's your own way of making a better world." Hannibal recalled the moments when he went after those who murdered his beautiful Mischa.

It was spurred by revenge and hatred, but then he had also discovered an art form to those murders. And that saved his soul from the hatred which was devouring it. "You are a wonder, Will," he said, once again kissing Will's knuckles. "The social contract is cancelled when the authorities don't have the political will to apply the law. That is why the Founding Fathers gave us the 2nd Amendment. And what you do, it's not that different really." Will sighed then. "I sound like another politician, don't I?" Hannibal merely smiled. Then he let go of Will's hand and caressed Will's cheek instead. "My dear, I'm just glad you are speaking your mind. I want you to let go of everything that's bothering you… it will make you feel better." Will looked into Hannibal's eyes. "You want me to… vent?" "If it will make you feel better, then yes." They continued their dinner. Later, Hannibal took Will to bed, where they exchanged kisses until they eventually fell asleep in each other's arms.

Eventually, and two unnecessary victims later, Jack got the proper authorization from the administration to search the Immigration database, and arrested the muslim killer, just as Will had predicted. The guy didn't even try to deny anything, even boasting that he was doing the will of god. He was proud of it as he followed religious injunctions. He was preparing to randomly attack people shopping in a mall for Christmas so it was certainly a good thing that Jack caught him on time to avoid a bloodbath. Nevertheless, Will was bitter because of all the red tape they had to go through just to do their job. He hated political corruption, and particularly when the very same people he had to protect were left as lambs to slaughter for dirty games. Will saw what Hannibal was doing differently from there. Hannibal's way of serving justice seemed violent but at the same time Will saw it as fair. All the last lockers he had to fully embrace his life with Hannibal jumped. Two weeks later, he brought his stuff to Hannibal's home. No more driving for hours to and from… when you could enjoy more

cumings in bed. They were quite busy, Hannibal at the hospital and Will at Quantico already, so shared time was too precious to lose it in traffic.

The dogs were not so happy though. At first, they were agitated and seemed lost and whining, going from one room to another. With Hannibal's help, Will arranged a corner of the living room with their baskets and cushions. That settled the whining and going in circles in the unfamiliar house, but it took them few more days to adapt. They were not happy with the small courtyard and Will was worried if it could work for them. The dogs' anxiety didn't go unnoticed by Hannibal either. It put him on edge for a couple of days. But then, he looked at his David's face, and it was all for his benefit; if Will was happy, then Hannibal was happy too. He breathed deeply, content and then smiled. Ready to do anything to assure the continuity of this unexpected happiness. The first week-end they went to the house on the cliff, everything found its proper place. The dogs were running in the woods around all day. Will was amazed by the proximity of the ocean just like Hannibal had predicted and Hannibal enjoyed the serenity of it all.

Astral Projection

Chapter Notes

> Hi Fannibals, we truly appreciate your warm support and kind comments. Please don't forget to leave kudos and tell us more about your love for our Hannigram never-ending desire story. Enjoy life and carry on Hannibal!

The next week was uneventful, except for an invitation Hannibal and Will extended to Bedelia and Frederick. Will knew what had happened, that they had killed a patient and asked Hannibal to rescue them of their mess. He still held a grudge against them both, for the way they looked down at him, or any other patient or not, for that matter. They wanted to place themselves above mankind and its petty conditions, and for that they were the worst. Will still resented Frederick for wanting to use him as a ‘case study’ for his book. Bedelia on the other hand, well… Will just hated her on principle. He was grateful that she married Hannibal, only because the marriage made them both unhappy, and this drove Hannibal into Will’s arms. A little mean, but Will wasn’t above mankind’s petty conditions. He was sick of always trying to be nice to people who never appreciated him. The diner was planned for the next Thursday, and Will knew that Hannibal had already thought up the recipes and secured the meat. He didn’t ask anything, Hannibal would eventually tell him more if he felt like it. They needed to respect each other’s secret garden if they wanted their life together to succeed. And Will never wanted anything more.

The next week-end in the house on the cliff was like paradise time for all of them. The dogs whined like crazy in the car when they understood where they were driving too. Will put his hand on Hannibal’s thigh and squeezed gently to thank him for their loud joy. They looked at each other and smiled. *I want to grow old with this man,* Will thought as Hannibal smiled at him. When he looked back, he thought that he was still surprised to have Hannibal in his life, and the way he became his life. Nothing was more important for him now. Should he be worried about it? Maybe, but he didn’t want to think about it. Just live and enjoy life together. That evening after dinner, they were both seated on the couch and sipping a Glenfiddich 1937 whiskey when Will went on his knees between Hannibal’s legs and put his head on Hannibal’s thigh. Eyes closed he stayed like this a long time, enjoying Hannibal’s hand stroking his curls. “There is nowhere else I’d rather be,” he said eventually. He opened his eyes and saw the adoration in Hannibal’s eyes again. This sharing of the souls demanded sharing of the bodies as well. Hannibal bent and reverently deposited a chaste kiss on Will’s lips. Will sighed, feeling loved.

The sound of the waves coming from the open door on the terrace infused an ethereal atmosphere. Time stopped for them yet again. This actual place and time was added as a new room in their common mind palace. Hannibal gently nudged Will to stand, and pulled him onto his lap. Will put his arms around Hannibal's shoulders. "I never imagined this, Will… I never thought I could ever be happy again, after… after I lost my sister. But here… now… with you…" Will leaned his forehead against Hannibal's. "I never thought I'd ever fall in love and settle in a relationship, but here I am. I'm glad I went to that stupid symposium…" Will was too moved to speak, too aroused too. He kissed Hannibal to make him stop speaking too. *Silence is the right place right now to be, to feel, while our bodies disappear in the shared sensations.* With empathy on both sides, there were no boundaries to limit the symbiosis. The kiss grew deeper, louder, rougher until the urge to feel each other's skin sent them in a frenzy to undress each other as fast as possible.

The concerto of moans vied with the waves resound. Hands caressed every attainable skin. When the frantic ballet wasn't enough anymore, Will slid down on his knees again and took Hannibal's heavy cock in his hand to lick it with lust and need. Hannibal put his head back and moaned for Will. He knew his lover will play him for a while. They will both enjoy the little torture as foreplay. Will took his time savouring all the folds of Hannibal's dick head while his saliva and the sea air felt fresh along his penis. The contrast between the burning head and the cold on the length made him even harder if at all possible, almost painful. Nothing was lost as they both felt it so. Empathy is a two-edged sword, and Will felt himself too hard to play longer. He got up and put his knees on both sides of Hannibal's hips while he placed his hands on his shoulders. They kissed languorously and Will whispered in Hannibal's ear, "Now you can have your reckoning…" Hannibal's large hand took both their cocks together and gave them some gentle strokes while sucking in Will's neck to mark him with small bruises that they will both enjoy seeing later.

The pre-cum was enough to soften the friction, but he had to catch the lubricant in Will's jeans pocket for more. After a few contortions and complaints from Will, he grabbed it and opened the bottle with dexterity. He poured the liquid directly on their cocks and spread it with his hand. The friction was now more enjoyable and somehow more difficult to resist. Will jerked and got up on his knees. He put his hand on Hannibal's neck and made him look at him while his hand continued to caress Hannibal's hair. The shared fire in their eyes was burning their souls. "I want you… I want you inside me… Hannibal…" Will almost screamed. "Shh… not yet, my Love…" Will pleaded, gasping. "..H...Ha…..Hannibal…." Hannibal placed kisses on every surface of Will's skin he could reach. "I… will… make sure… you never forget this night, Will." Hannibal circled the base of Will's cock and tightened his grip there with his left hand, while his right went between Will's legs, making sure he felt his fingers massage his perineum on the way to his hole. Will was already lost in sensations, eyes closed tight to resist the urge to cum he felt in his low belly when Hannibal's finger went into him. He froze, attentive to the sensations it created there, as it went in and out. "Let me… hear you, Will… don't hold back… sing for me…" Will groaned, his body jerking. On his own volition, his body worked in synergy with Hannibal's movements to

increase the pleasure. Every sound that came out of Will's mouth was like the instruments of the orchestra taking turns to play. And Hannibal lost himself in the symphony.

"Ha...Hannibal….p..p...please….oh god!" Will begged. Hannibal only responded by adding a second finger and continued to work Will steadily. It took a lot from him to stop himself to just fuck him right now, but he promised it to be memorable and he needed it to be. His left hand tightened a little too much around Will's cock under the effort and Will whined in pain before Hannibal loosened his fingers a little bit. He felt Will relax gradually and added a third finger. "I… will never tire of this, my Beloved… hearing the music from your mouth…" Will's answer was a strained laugh. "Foreplay… with… you… is… torture!" Hannibal chuckled too. Then, his eyes still on Will, he removed his fingers and entered Will. Again, Will's body jerked, his cheeks clenched around Hannibal's cock. Releasing his grip around Will's cock, Hannibal had his hands on Will's hips now, with outstretched strength as his back arched to better penetrate him. Joined together, their bodies moved as if dancing to a rhythm. Hannibal held onto Will, as if he was gripping driftwood trying not to drown. Will panted, kept chanting "more, harder" over and over while his own hands held on to Hannibal's shoulders. The only witnesses to their coupling were the crickets, the waves, the moon and the darkness. Will came screaming Hannibal's name, and Hannibal came shortly after, Will's name bursting out of his mouth. They laid there, spent, breathing hard. Their bodies slicked with sweat, cum and lubricant. But in their mind palace, the whole act was perfection. This was their Becoming, their metamorphosis into one entity.

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The next morning everything was the same… but different. As if the silence was a continuous dialogue between them. The symbiosis was completed. The feeling was strange and pleasant. They looked at each other smiling, sharing the same feeling and knowing it. When they spoke to each other, it was with a renewed pleasure to hear the other's voice. Hannibal thought he'd never be happy again, after his parents and sister were taken from him. But now, here with his David, his heart began to beat again; a bright light now shone within the darkness of his soul. Will on the other hand felt like he was floating on a cloud. Everything seemed to possess beauty and serenity. Even the dogs felt the difference as they were more peaceful around them. In a blink of an eye, the weekend passed in the cotton atmosphere. The serenity settled deeper during the following week, and they were not bothered.

On Thursday, Hannibal made preparations for their dinner with Bedelia and Frederick. Will was watching him in the kitchen, perched on a high stool, leaning against the kitchen island. He took pleasure in watching how Hannibal's muscles moved along his forearms, shoulders, back while he was busy cooking. Hannibal's graceful movements made it seem like a dance. The way he tossed the vegetables for the salad, as he stirred the sauce, as he marinated the meat and placed it in the baking tray… It seemed like a well-choreographed dance move. Will smiled and chuckled to himself, *Damn, does Hanni look hot!* Hannibal looked up from his mixing bowl. "Something amusing, my Love?" Will shook his head. "You look…

hot! I mean you always look hot… but… the way you… move around the kitchen… makes it look so easy." "The kitchen is the place where I feel engulfed by my passion and feel really alive… At least it was before you. Now I feel alive even stuck in the traffic coming back home. This is what you do to me, Will. And I even love you more for it if it is possible." Will smiled in his eyes, lighting both of their souls. Hannibal took great attention in the decorum on the dinner table as always. He used a lot of animal skulls and insects mixed with dark flowers. Will knew that his goal was to remind Bedelia and Frederick of their crime. Guilt has always been an easy tool to manipulate people.

At 8:30 pm, when the doorbell rang, Hannibal opened the door with his usual charm. Welcoming his now ex-wife and her lover, who, Hannibal reminded to himself, slept in his bed with his then-wife. He didn't even care, and that made him smile more. "You are just in time, lovely!" he said while he hung their coats on the antique coat rack at the entrance. Bedelia seemed to be a little stressed, but Frederick tried to rivalize in charm with Hannibal. "It is so nice of you to have us for dinner, Hannibal." Before Frederick could say anymore, Will came out of the dining room to greet them. "Dr Chilton… Dr Du Maurier..." Bedelia stared at Will, as if wanting to burn him with her gaze. But when she felt Frederick's hand on her back, she nodded and quickly looked away. Frederick on the other hand started talking to Will about the last high-profile case. While Jack was reluctant to pursue the killer using Will's detailed profile, eventually the guy was caught. The whole incident at the mall turned into a media circus. *Chilton probably wants to use it for his stupid book!*

Will didn't want to comment, since the whole case left a sour taste in his mouth - especially with all the red tape which surrounded it. "Maybe you should ask Jack about it?" Will said, wanting to end the conversation. "Oh, I have. He's not really saying much. And I know that he only went after that religious fanatic because of your wonderful insight! I do wonder what it's like in that amazing mind of yours, William…" Hannibal gripped Frederick's shoulder firmly. "He prefers to be called Will, Frederick. Now, please stop making my Beloved uncomfortable. He's still recovering from his attack. Do proceed to the dining room." Bedelia watched the whole exchange with contempt. *Hmp! Fancy that… Hannibal has to rescue his… whore from Frederick,* Bedelia moved into the dining room wondering what Hannibal had prepared for dinner. Bedelia and Frederick both froze in shock discovering the dinner table decoration: Will smiled, meeting Hannibal's eyes, as they so often did now. *It worked so well, good job Hanni!* The macabre decorations even rendered Frederick mute while he was taking his seat at the table. That alone was an accomplishment!

Will decided to pour the wine while Hannibal brought out the food. "Hanni told me this is a Chateau Haut-Brion Blanc… not that I know what it means. But it's supposed to go well with our first dish for tonight," Will said as he filled Frederick and Bedelia's glasses. He then poured the wine into Hannibal's and his own glass. Bedelia scowled. *So the whore's learning to be cultured. How contrite!* She sipped the wine, wondering where Hannibal bought it from. She knew one bottle of this white Sauvignon Blanc cost more than $1000.

Frederick almost drained the glass. “Yes! This is most definitely a good wine!” Bedelia sighed. She has some work to do with Frederick as well to refine his manners. After Hannibal, the comparison was cruel for Frederick. Hannibal came with their plates. Most refined presentation of fish and seafood in a nest of green salad and algae. “Carmin tuna on green sea,” he announced proudly putting the first plate in front of Bedelia and then in front of Frederick.

He smiled and then took his seat caressing Will’s hand on the table, “My Will is learning the arts of the table. He is a fast learner despite his modesty. He chose the wines for tonight’s dinner, and I wouldn’t have chosen better.” “You are too kind… Honey…” Hannibal chuckled, seeing Will playing on Bedelia’s nerves. Indeed she choked on her oyster realizing that Will played her sense of decorum by taking the uncultured role, and hearing Will calling Hannibal “Honey”. Will’s smile for Bedelia was all teeth. Frederick realized that something was happening and knew that Bedelia held a grudge against Will. For reason unknown to him because thanks to him she was free to marry him. So he just smiled and ate trying to enjoy the luxury food and wine despite the palpable tension. “Delicious food, as always Hannibal,” Frederick said, as he swallowed another piece of oyster. He dared not speak with his mouth full of food, lest he angers Hannibal. Bedelia did complain about Hannibal’s uptight behaviour at dinner tables.

Will chewed his food all the time glancing at Hannibal. He felt his cheeks grow warm when Hannibal returned his gaze, as if Will was a blushing maiden. Bedelia kept staring while she ate. *Oh how sickening! They look like teenagers in love!* She drank her wine to keep from saying something sarcastic. Hannibal held her and Frederick’s lives in his palm since he rescued them, and she resented it, but had to play nice. How she would enjoy to hurt their little romance with few well chosen words. The satisfaction she would have to erase those blissed smiles off their faces... It was a violence to resist it. To numb the rage she drank as she often did. Envy and rage are the worst combination, they bitter your life and your soul. Bedelia soured her life when she slid on that path, and would make a hell of Frederick’s life as well. She saw that but didn’t have Hannibal’s courage to change her life for happiness. So she drank.

They made small talk, Hannibal casually enquired about Bedelia and Frederick’s practice. Frederick, curious as always, asked about Will’s cases. Will sighed, “You know I cannot comment about ongoing investigations, Dr Chilton.” “No, of course not,” Frederick chuckled. “But I’m sure you can probably tell me a few things about this… this religious fanatic. How did you come up with the theory?” Hannibal saw Will’s discomfort, so he looked Frederick in the eyes and said, “Really, Frederick. I did warn you about Will’s delicate condition. So refrain from aggravating my Beloved. He was viciously attacked, as you heard from the news.” Frederick chuckled, “Yes, you’re right. Where are my manners… I will see a lot of them soon anyway as I have the pleasure to announce you in prime time that I was chosen as the director of the BSHCI. For the authorities they are always treated like disturbed

individuals, so I believe the BSHCI will be a nice place to study them." "Congratulations are in order then, well done Frederick!" Hannibal told him as his raised his glass.

Frederick wriggled, "Bedelia and me, we also have another big news to announce…" Bedelia looked at him with amusement and a little affection "...We decided to get married, so we will become full partners for our private practice. Bedelia will be in charge there, while I will be free to devote my time to my new position." "How nice to see that you thought through all the details out already, congratulations!" answered Hannibal with a mocking grin on his face that didn't go unnoticed by Bedelia. He got up and disappeared in the kitchen to come back with the next course. "Filet mignon with orange," he proudly announced while he put the first plate in front of Bedelia. Will knew better than to believe it was braised pork and looked at his glass to avoid betraying his thoughts on the "meat". "Wonderful!" exclaimed Frederick looking at the aromatic dish in front of him. "Thank you, I hope you will enjoy it. It is a Spanish recipe that I learned when I was staying in Andalusia."

Hannibal put the dish in front of Will, and gently brushed his finger on Will's cheek furtively while their gazes meet. *One day I shall take my Beloved to Seville, and Granada too. How beautiful it would be to walk together under the orange trees in blossom,* Hannibal thought to himself. He was already imagining making love to Will with the heady scent of those ripe fruit trees in the air. He served them some red Bordeaux wine, Richebourg Grand Cru 1985, to accompany the meat before sitting again. "Hanni?" Will touched Hannibal's shoulder. Hannibal cleared his throat. "Forgive me. I...I just cannot believe this is real, my Dear… Now that you've moved in with me and I have the pleasure of spending every waking moment with you." Bedelia dropped her fork in shock. *What! That whore has moved in with Hannibal?* She reached out for her glass and drank the rest of the wine in one gulp. Hannibal enjoyed watching every bite that Bedelia and Frederick took of Bryan Fuller, the promising young producer they had murdered together. What a nice way to celebrate their new matrimonial life. It seemed that Will had the same thought, as he glanced at Hannibal and was trying to fight a grin.

The dessert was a raspberry cheesecake and the coulis design married the form of drops of blood flowing on the sides. Bedelia and Frederick looked at each other at the sight, unsure how to react. Will was smiling at their discomfort, Hannibal was a master of manipulation. He looked at him and his gaze communicated all his love and admiration. They smiled in collusion. Their complicity didn't need words, and it was so nice to be seen and to share what was touching your soul. Hannibal wished to be alone with Will now. He excused himself to shorten the evening, on the pretext of a heavy work day at the surgery block the next day. Bedelia was already not so sure in her way of walking when she went to the door. Frederick shook hands with Hannibal and Will to thank them for the dinner and took Bedelia's arm to help her walk down the stairs.

Hannibal closed the door behind them and immediately reached for Will's lips. He sighed in his mouth with content as he was finding a lost paradise. Will embraced him in the warmth of his hug. They stayed there kissing slowly for a while until the lust overwhelmed them and Hannibal took Will to their bed. Hannibal made love to Will very slowly that night with a note of desperation, like a shipwreck hung on his lifeline. Will let him, sharing the desperate feeling to have escaped a life without love. As they laid on the bed later, sated and breathing hard, Will chuckled. "I think your ex-wife hates me." Hannibal, drawing circles on Will's abdomen with his finger answered, "But does that bother you, my Love?" "No. I don't give a shit what she thinks. She left you first. Her loss." Will said, as he took Hannibal's hands in his. He kissed Hannibal's knuckles while looking into his lover's eyes. "What were you thinking about during dinner?" Hannibal smiled. "Observant as always, Dearest. I was imagining a stroll down the paths within a fruit orchard in Seville. And you beside me. Then while we rest beneath the trees, I'll make love to you." Will sighed. "Do you always imagine me naked, you pervert?" Hannibal's answer was to pounce on Will, tickling his sides while planting wet kisses all over. Will's laughter filled the air that night.

Sun Sanitation

After another nice weekend in the house on the cliff with the dogs, the next week went by uneventful. Hannibal left in the morning with a kiss on Will's lips, and Will drove to Quantico smiling to himself with the ghost of Hannibal's kiss on his lips. Will even surprised himself smiling at crime scenes and had to remove it quickly. His reputation as a weirdo didn't need any more encouragement. Beverly noticed, of course, and teased him mercilessly. But Will didn't mind. Life was good, simple, full. One morning, Hannibal had to drive Will to Quantico as his car needed a full service at the workshop. It was nice to drive together in the morning for once. They didn't talk much, just enjoyed the shared feeling. They kissed with intensity before Will left the car to enter the building. Hannibal watched him enter and stayed there a few seconds, savouring the moment. He really didn't feel like going to the hospital, but he had a surgical appointment at 10:30 am. Hannibal drove off to John Hopkins. Like clockwork, Hannibal entered the hospital and was greeted by the other doctors and nurses. He entered his office, hung up his coat and jacket. Then he rolled up his shirt sleeves and removed his tie. He then left the office and headed towards the operation theatre. A few hours later, he was joking with the anesthetist when he exited the operating room.

Once he had cleaned up and left a word with the nurses to update him on his patient, Hannibal went to his office to collect his things. It was past lunch hour, and Will should be ending his class soon. If he timed it right, Hannibal would be able to pick Will up and they could have a late lunch at that new cafe which opened nearby. As he drove towards the FBI headquarters, Hannibal was a little surprised to find himself whistling Franz Liszt's *Romance* . The melody reminded him of Will somehow. Reaching the parking lot, he checked his watch. 2:55 pm. Will should be done soon. He parked near the front door and sent text to Will, letting him know he was waiting for him. He then stepped out of the car and leaned against it to take in the sunlight. It was nice to be out on a sunny day anticipating the next moment with his beloved. The pleasure was already here while waiting for him, he thought smiling to himself.

As he stood there, Hannibal noticed two agents walk out towards the car park. They seemed to be laughing about something or other. The shorter one took out a pack of cigarettes. He lit a cigarette and then waved the pack to his taller companion. The taller man shook his head. "I quit months ago, Les… told you…" The shorter man chuckled. "Your loss, Paul… your loss." Les deliberately blew smoke on Paul's face. Paul turned away, smacking Les on the shoulder. They both laughed. Hannibal glanced at his watch again. It was almost 3:30 pm now and Will had yet to come out of the entrance. *I wonder if Jack has held him back again,* he thought. He was about to call Will when he saw his beloved at the main door. Will was standing on the top step, glancing around the carpark. But he was interrupted by Jack's booming voice. Will rolled his eyes, turned back to glare at Jack. "Well, well… look who it is?" Paul sneered. Les took a puff and looked at the entrance. "That's Will-the-freak-Graham, right?" Les said, smirking. Paul shook his head. "I don't know what the hell Crawford sees in

that freak… He's not even an agent, but he's always called out to the crime scenes. Les, I bet you he's getting all the perks by being the damn cocksucker that he is!" Les stared at Paul. "Aw, come on Paul… Give it a rest…" Paul seemed adamant. "I'm telling you, Les… Graham's probably giving Jack a good blow, so Jack lets him tag along…"

The rest of Paul's words sounded like white noise to Hannibal's ears. He was furious at both the agents, but more so towards the pig who called his beloved filthy names. *Since you don't smoke, perhaps I should buy you a slow and painful death instead,* Hannibal said to himself. He committed Paul's face to memory. He'll find out more details about that pig soon. On the stairs Jack was now leaving Will, who found Hannibal at the car park and waved at him. As Will walked down the stairs towards Hannibal, the pig called out. "How's it going, Graham-Cracker?" Will rolled his eyes. "Day was better till I saw your ugly mug, Kendall," Will called out, ignoring whatever the pig or his equally stupid friend said. *Ah, Paul Kendall! You'll regret ever insulting my beautiful David* , Hannibal smiled. In his mind palace, he was already picturing his latest 'art piece'. Will forgot Kendall as soon as he took Hannibal in his arms and kissed him deeply. They looked at each other, smiled and got in the car without a word. Just as they were about to leave, Hannibal glanced at the parking lot and saw the shocked look on Les and Paul's faces. Paul looked disgusted. Hannibal smirked as he drove to the cafe. Will's hand found its place on his thigh as usual and he leaned back on the seat, relaxing. Hannibal took a look at him with adoration.

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Five months later, Hannibal stopped at the nurses' desk to check his schedules for next week when he saw a policeman guarding the recovery room in front. Seeing his interrogating look, the chief nurse told him that an FBI agent was brought in during the night with a bullet wound. Apparently he fell into a trap by an informant who betrayed him, and the gang then finished his colleague with a bullet to the head. They didn't do as good of a job with him. Hannibal recognized in her tone that she was regretting that gang's mistake, and was surprised as the chief nurse was known for her compassion and easy rapport with patients. By curiosity, he looked at the patient's name chart… Paul Kendall. He smiled brightly, but looked at the chief nurse with sympathy. *Oh how I've waited to meet you again, Agent Kendall.* Just a few nights ago, Will had complained to him about Kendall; he had seen Will in the men's room and had rudely asked Will if he liked "taking it up the ass". Will ignored Kendall, even as he went on to make other rude remarks. Hannibal told Will that he should report Kendall for harassment, bordering on homophobia. Will dismissed the idea, saying that he couldn't care less what anyone says to him since only Hannibal's opinion mattered.

A few days later, Paul Kendall was savouring the success of his plan with the head of the Death Angels gang. This drug gang was rapidly expanding its territory and business was good for them as they showed themselves merciless for anyone daring to be on their path. A

bullet in the shoulder was nothing for 1 million dollars. Of course, the necessary death of his colleague was a regretful event… but it could happen in the line of duty. They both knew it. Still it was painful and his incessant complaints made him unpopular with the nurses. Now in the middle of the night it was even more difficult to have someone responding to the call button. He wanted more morphine and was upset no one responded despite him pressing the button at least ten times.

Hannibal left his office and went through the corridors of the hospital, quiet and empty at this late hour. When he approached the room 304 he smiled to himself. The guard was dozing in an armchair on side of the door. Like a flash he was above him and the syringe of sedative against his neck. He held his head with a hand on his mouth a few seconds before the guard slumped forward. Hannibal adjusted his limbs to make it look like the guard fell asleep, and managed to grab his cuffs. When he saw a doctor enter his room, he was ready to tell him how dissatisfied he was until he recognized the guy. It was the same guy that Graham had kissed in front of him some months ago. The doctor walked quickly to his bed with a feral smile and before he had time to make a sound the doctor crushed his voice box with a quick move. Kendall clawed the hand around his throat, his feet kicking at the bed frame. Hannibal squeezed harder, not caring about anything around him. The pig had to die, such pigs don't deserve to exist. However he intended to take his time savouring his pain, so he resisted the immediate pleasure and released his grip.

Kendall tried to breath with terror in his eyes. *Such a satisfying sight,* thought Hannibal. "You and I, agent Kendall, will spend your last moment on earth together. I am afraid that it will be more pleasant for me than for you, but too soon you will be dead so I would advise you to enjoy the pain as well because it will be all you have until the end." Kendall croaked out a reply. "Who… are… you?" "My name is not important. However, you've been very crude to the most important person in my life." Kendall's blank look made Hannibal smirk. "Not that smart after all, are we?" Kendall tried to get up, but Hannibal pinned him back against his pillow, "Tsh, tsh, tsh… there is nowhere for you to run." Hannibal took the handcuffs from the guard in his pocket and closed one end around Kendall's wrist and the other end onto the metal bed frame. While Kendall was in vain frantically trying to break free, Hannibal injected some clear liquid into the lead of his IV bag. "With that you will be more cooperative for our small private party, not moving too much but feeling the pain intact," he told him looking in his eyes. Kendall's eyes widened in fear. He tried to speak, but his words were slurred now because of the drug. "...pppeese….who…..who….no….." Hannibal then closed the room door, locking it. He didn't want anyone to disturb his private party with Kendall.

Kendall had a very satisfying death… At least from Hannibal's point of view. It took him more than one hour to die, and the display he left for the FBI was a good replica of the Death Angels crime scenes. But Hannibal added his own personal touch… for Will's benefit. At

first glance, the whole scene would look like the gang had come back to finish what they started. He took off his plastic suit in the corner of the room not too stained by blood, took his trade tools in the canvas bag, listened a few second before he exited the room.

The nurse on call was busy in a room with a patient and no one saw him when he left the room and took the lift to the parking. He knew for a long time where were the cameras in the hospital public areas were and how to avoid them on his way out. While he drove back home, he felt serene and somehow relieved to have put this particular pig to death. The world would be a better place without him, and he will no longer harass Will at Quantico. It was almost morning when Hannibal slipped into bed against Will's warm body. He spooned him and slid his arm around his waist, kissing the back of his neck. Will made a small grunt of pleasure, put his hand on his without waking up. Hannibal's heart burst in his chest, such happiness was almost painful and threatening. He fell to sleep with a blissed smile on his lips.

Celestial Harmony

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for your kudos and comments, they fuel our writers'energy!

The first sunbeams that passed through the openings of the curtains, woke Will up. He laid without moving, feeling the pleasure of Hannibal around him, against his back and his arm around his chest. Then he smelled the unmistakable coppery scent. *Who was it this time?* Will wondered. But he remained silent, waiting for Hannibal to say something. When Hannibal didn't say anything, Will just turned over resting his head on Hannibal's chest. "Wanna share the bathroom?" Hannibal smiled, running his fingers through Will's curls. "I could never say no to that, Will." Will went in the bathroom first to pee, then he opened the water in the shower while Hannibal came behind him and kissed his neck. Sharing each other's space, touching each other was so natural as an extension of oneself. Will went under the shower, Hannibal pissed and joined him. He took the soap when Will finished with it. Will rinsed himself and exited the shower. Hannibal smiled, everything was so comfortable, intimacy and complicity.

When Hannibal exited the bathroom, Will's phone rang. He already knew why, but didn't show anything. Will growled with dissatisfaction having a pretty good idea of why Jack will be demanding for his attention on the other end of the line. "Yeah… yes… ok… what? At the hospital? Ok, ok… yeah I'll be there." Will hung up, frowning hard. Hannibal had turned his back to Will, as he stared at his opened wardrobe. "There's been a murder at John Hopkins." Will said, hoping for Hannibal's reaction. Hannibal turned to face Will with a blank face. "Oh? Then I suppose you'll have to leave without breakfast." Will waited for more, but Hannibal was still acting very casual. Then he sighed. "Ok, fine… don't tell me. I'll go see what the fuss is about. See you later, Hanni." Will said, kissing Hannibal's cheek. Hannibal pulled Will closer, kissing him soundly on the lips. "Do be back for dinner. I have something special for us tonight."

When Will arrived at the John Hopkins Hospital, it was the frenzy of a war zone. Policemen were in numbers at the parking and at the entrance. He saw Beverly speaking with a police officer and went to her. "Hi Bev! What is all of that?" "Good morning to you too, Sleeping Beauty!" Beverly smiled brightly at him. "You look like you fell from your bed… Did Hannibal pushed you out hearing Jack yelling through your phone…" Will smirked, "Yeah… that's pretty much what happened… Except that, well… if Hanni and I were actually in bed when Jack called, it wouldn't be Jack yelling…" Beverly laughed out loud, smacking Will's arm. "Graham's getting laid and rubbing it in! Never thought I'd see the day!" Will laughed

too, but his next words were cut off by a growl. “Alright! Enough! Katz, you had a job to do, and it wasn’t performing stand-up with Graham! And You!” Jack pointed to Will. “You… get your ass in there… and tell me what the hell happened to Kendall!” Will’s eyes widened. “Kendall?” He knew Kendall had been shot during his undercover ops. There was always an agent stationed outside Kendall’s room, since the FBI feared that the one who shot him might be back to finish the job. “Why are all these cops here, Jack? What didn’t you tell me?..” Jack look at the floor, taking a few seconds to think how he will phrase it, “Well apparently, the news of the murder of Agent Kendall arrived on the street very fast, and an informant tell his handler that Kendall was dirty.”

Jack sighed with sadness and pain. Kendall was one of his agents, and his guilt, if proved, would be a stain for him as well. “Presently a joined team with our guys and theirs are searching his apartment. We need to clean this mess fast, Will.” *Well, well, well… Dirty Kendall was even more dirty… Not really a surprise…* ”Okay, Jack. Show me to his room.” Jack was suddenly more energized having Will committed to his task. “Follow me on the third floor.” They went to the elevator. Passing through the crowd of uniforms, Will heard Beverly reassuring a police officer that all the light will be made, and the results will be shared with the PD without omission. The rivalry between the two departments was doing nothing to insure the trust. For a brief moment, Will wondered if it really was a gang-hit. *If it was, why is Jack wanting me to take a look?* Will just followed Jack, while in his mind there were many questions. On the third floor, the silence was oppressing after the frenzy of the entrance. Obviously the nurses were in shock and some had swelled eyes attesting they had cried. They glanced at him with worried looks. His dark figure wasn’t comforting. Healers have a special sense to detect predators. Jack lead Will to the room, and made a sign with the head to tell him to get inside. Will smelled the blood again from behind the door. It should have been disgusting, he knew, but he liked it. It was the scent of Hannibal’s skin, he sighed with content before entering the room.

Jack saw Will as he sighed with pain before entering the room. He knew how crime scenes took a toll on people, and even more so on Will due to his highly sensitive nature. But he needed him to do the job, so he pushed his good sentiments deep down to not be bothered with them anymore, and waited for him to come out. Will looked into the room in awe. It was horrifying yet beautiful. He felt affected by a mix of love and gratitude. He felt the love and gratitude of Hannibal for him. He could cry right now by how moved he was by Hannibal’s gesture for him. Hannibal was beautiful in his own way. A way only Will could see, and he was seeing it right now. There was blood almost everywhere, spats of blood deliberately sprayed over the walls like a Pollock’s painting. A frame to center part, the dead body was attached on the bed which stood up in front of the door against the back wall. It was white, almost like marble, bloodless. His head was drooling on his open chest, his arms were maintained in front with shared pieces of the sheets, and in his hands he was offering his heart… to Will.

I know you. I know who you are. I… I'm not fond of you. I think you're ugly, so I turn you into art. You… you've wronged someone. Someone that I… love… Will almost lost his balance, quickly grabbing the door knob. He was breathing hard now. This was not a gang hit… no, this was definitely Hannibal. But why Kendall? Then he remembered his conversation with Hannibal three days ago. *...how rude of him, Will. You should report Agent Kendall for harassment what he said to you…* He also remembered the other times before, when Kendall found it fun to bully him in front of others, when he did it in front of Hannibal in the parking lot. He remembered the rage he read on Hannibal's face then, the onet only he could see in the very small contraction of the jaw. The world will definitely be better without Agent Kendall, no question about that, but here at John Hopkins hospital… That was very stupid! Hannibal had acted like a teenager in love, it was charming indeed, but very, very stupid! Will was torn between bliss and rage, as he often was with Hannibal. Now was not the time to consider what he will tell him tonight, he had to think of what he will tell Jack.

Having made up his mind, Will turned to face Jack. "This is the work of a gang. The heart… it's something personal. They… they wanted the FBI to know what Kendall did was personal. They were offended by something he said, or did… I dunno… must be something going on with the case he was involved in." Jack frowned hard. "So… whoever did this… was sending us a message from the gang leader?" "Yes! I mean… look, Jack! There's blood everywhere…. it's messy… it's brutal… this is definitely from the gang!" Jack rubbed his jaw. "Yeah… you might be right… I thought it was a Ripper Copycat… but then, the Ripper is never messy." Beverly exited the lift and walked quickly to them, " Boss, you will not like what I have to tell you…" Jack looked at her with the same frown, "Go on…" "The joined team found a Vanuatu bank slip in Kendall's apartment. He received one million from another Caribbean bank…" Jack sighted and exhaled slowly and deeply, "A dirty FBI agent… all that we needed. We have to clean the mess with the PD if we ever want be able to work with them. And make sure that damn Freddie Lounds doesn't find out about Kendall!" Jack thought again of Kendall's teammate who was killed, when he himself was only wounded. They have to reopen the investigation now and look for what they missed the first time. He knew he will have some really annoying phone conversations with his hierarchy too, but it was absolutely necessary to keep it contained. The official version would be two agents were murdered by Death Angels gang members in the line of duty, at least for the press and the families.

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Later that evening, Will marched into Hannibal's kitchen. Hannibal was busy stirring something in a deep saucepan when an arm reached out from behind him and turned off the stove. "Will! The sauce…" "I don't give a FUCK about the sauce!" Will was livid. "What you did was careless, Hannibal. Stupid and careless. I know you hated Kendall because he was rude, but… but killing him… in the hospital? That… that's just…" Hannibal wanted to pull his beloved closer, at the same time admire the raging fire in his David's blue eyes. "I did it for you, Will. He was nothing but an ugly pig… I wanted to elevate him to something beautiful. I gifted him to you…" Will started pacing. "No… no! Don't bullshit me that you did it for me… This has to stop! You… Hanni, if you keep doing this… especially in the

hospital… you're going to get caught!" Hannibal embraced Will tightly. Will leaned in against him, his face in Hannibal's neck and sighed. "Are we not what is most important for us? Will you sacrifice us for your murder art? Hannibal, please, don't… I'm not asking you to stop, just don't do it at the hospital…" Hannibal took a deep breath, and kissed the top of Will's head. "Alright, my Love. I'm sorry. That was reckless of me. I shall… try to be more careful in the future." Will then looked up at Hannibal. "I know Kendall was an asshole, but why his heart?"

Hannibal looked back at those blue eyes which made his heart stop that first time at the symposium. "He hated you. I suspect he was jealous that you won Jack Crawford's favour in the BAU. At first, I wanted to 'make' him apologise for his rudeness. But as he lay there dying, the only thing in my mind was you, Will Graham." Hannibal's cheeks turned a little pink. "I… I confess that… you are the only thing on my mind these past few months. So, I dedicated this work to you." Will smiled with his eyes, "I saw it when I was there…" "I knew you would." They kissed languidly and time stopped again. Eventually, Will and Hannibal were in the bedroom. Panting and moaning, grabbing onto each other. They both came hard screaming each other's names. When Hannibal finally got out of the bed and walked towards the bathroom, he glanced at the clock on the wall. "Hmm… I suppose it's not too late for dinner." Will chuckled as he slowly moved. "You know… much as I both love and hate what you did to Kendall, I'm glad you didn't bring home any part of him." Hannibal shook his head. "Darling, as I told you before… I'm VERY careful with what I put into my body. Now, I also have to be careful with what my soulmate eats too. But I had to have my trophy, you know me Will, so very soon I will cook you blood pudding with applesauce. I have a very old French recipe that I want to try." Will rolled his eyes smiling, "...yeah, you just had to take a trophy… sentimental old man…" Hannibal smacked Will's ass. "Who are you calling old?" Will laughed. They cleaned up, got dressed again and went down to the kitchen to continue their dinner preparation. Hannibal gave some vegetables for Will to cut. And they spoke of the next week-end with the dogs. Everything was peaceful and serene, just as Will needed it to be.

Solar Blaze

Chapter Notes

> Fannibals, In response to the NSFW ban being enacted by Tumblr Staff, on December 17th 2018 let's all log off of our Tumblr accounts for 24 hours. To protest, log off of your Tumblr account for the entirety of December 17th. Log off at 12 am EST or 9PM PST and stay off for 24 hours. Don't post. Don't log on. Don't even visit the website. Don't give them that sweet ad revenue.
>
> Please sign the petition https://www.change.org/p/tumblr-com-allow-nsfw-content-on-tumblr, and if you can donate to AO3 which is so precious to us all!

Life went on for a few weeks like this - peaceful and serene. Hannibal busy with heavy schedules at the hospital, Will with a few other murder crime scenes, mostly gangs related since Kendall's murder. Will told Beverly that he'd moved in with Hannibal, and his dogs had joined him as well. "Wow! This is serious, Will. But I'm glad you're happy. You deserve something good in your life," Beverly said, her hand lightly squeezing Will's shoulder. Will maybe should have felt a little annoyed by his kind of double life, between the FBI and Hannibal, but he was not. Except for Hannibal's murder art, he was doing his best to solve murders and bring serial killers to justice. He was still saving lives, but his and Hannibal's first. They deserved something good in their life. Then one evening, he felt it right away when he arrived home and opened the door. Hannibal's rage was echoing from wall to wall. He found him in the lounge, catatonic, eyes opened but unseeing. First, he left him to himself, respecting his need for silence. After two hours and an unsatisfactory cheese sandwich, he came back to the lounge and sat on the desk. Hannibal had not moved, he seemed far away in his mind palace. He stayed there for a while, opening his empathy to feel what was so disturbing for his lover. After another half hour, he murmured softly, "Hannibal, please let me in… talk to me..."

Hannibal sighed, then looked at Will. He was still furious, but he didn't want to take out his rage on Will. He slid one hand up on Will's thigh and left it there. The contact was a lifeline they both felt as such. "I wanted to kill him, I needed to kill him, but I had to keep my word to you, and didn't do it." With his words, Will felt all his distress. Hannibal was a wild and independent beast, and the effort he made to accommodate Will's apprehension was contrary to his very nature. Of course, Hannibal was never careless, rash or even precipitate in his murders. Will has seen how months or even years later he picked up the business cards of the pig of the day. But Hannibal always had everything under his control. Now restraining himself to please Will, was something new for Hannibal. Will didn't want his beast to be tamed. "I don't want to change you, Hannibal. I don't love you despite of what you are, I love you because of what you are." The love that went from each other's eyes electrified the

atmosphere. “You showed me my true self and accepted it with all its darkness and freed me. I want the same for you. I saw all of you, and love you because of what you are is a reflection of what I am. If not killing at the hospital makes you sick, then do it, but it will put us both in danger. You know it and I know it.”

Hannibal gently squeezed Will’s thigh. “I know Beloved, and I won’t do it. I know that we don’t have the luxury of nagging the bear. Jack isn’t stupid, and I don’t want to lose what we have. I will find a way to deal with my frustration. I love you, Will.” Will bent and tenderly put a chaste kiss on his lips. “I love you too, Hannibal.” Then Will got off the desk and left to go to bed. He knew that Hannibal needed some time alone to sort his thoughts. Later, he heard the front door close silently and the low hum of Hannibal’s car leaving the driveway. Will knew a business card would be missing from the rolodex the next day. He fell asleep and his dreams were visited by the stag. The forest was dark but it felt comforting with the presence of the stag somehow, not scary as it was before Hannibal. Later he felt Hannibal sliding under the sheets against him, his arm around his chest, the faint coppery scent, and he sighed with content in his sleep.

The next morning Will received a call while he was finishing breakfast with Hannibal. “Yeah… Ok… will be there in half an hour… yeah, yeah… See you.” Will turned to smile at Hannibal, “Apparently you left a “gruesome scene” at a diner, Love”. Hannibal came around the kitchen island, slid his arms around Will’s waist and kissed him tenderly, “I wish we could stay home, both of us today,” and kissed him more demanding. Will answered his kiss with warmth and put his hand on his neck to draw him closer. The Hollywood kiss lasted until they had to catch their breaths. “We both know… now it is not possible… maybe later,” Will told him panting. Hannibal gave him a thoughtful gaze and took back his seat to finish his coffee.

When Will arrived at the diner, Jack was waiting for him, impatient, on the parking lot. “Will, this is the Ripper for sure! Need you there to tell me what you see and if he left anything behind…” “Good morning to you too, Jack.” Will sighed. “What do you want him to leave behind, Jack. You should know by now that it is not how he works. He is too meticulous…” “He is still human, Will. Everyone makes mistakes!” ”Ok, let’s see if it is today…” Jack walked Will to the diner door. “We have five bodies... At least we know he is in good shape because two of them were Hells Angels bikers and put quite a fight from what we can see…” Will stopped at the door, making Jack understand not to follow him further. He took a deep breath and entered. *Yeah, alright a classic Chesapeake Ripper scene… was nice of Hanni to give something so typical to Jack.* Will wanted to laugh, but contained himself. It seemed like Hannibal was deliberately testing Jack’s patience with this new scene. Telling himself not to show any emotion or suspicious reaction, Will closed his eyes and took a deep breath. As the pendulum swung, the scene around him began to shift.

I'm… frustrated... want some release… Took your card from the rolodex, you are the lucky pig of the day. As I calm down, I realise that you are staring at me. I try to smile and start a conversation. But you… you are so rude! I realise now why I took your card before; your language is crude, your manners appalling. How I long to carve out your vile tongue, maybe crush your larynx so that I never have to hear you speak again. You are the owner of this place, yet with your behaviour I cannot imagine how the customers tolerate you. While I wait for you to close and have a private party with you, the two bikers seated next to me at the counter, are laughing at my style of clothing, or something else. Will's eyes fluttered open a while. He notices the phone on the ground, the cracked screen frozen with the Tattle-crime website.

Ah! I know why you're mocking me. One of you whispers the words 'Tattle-Crime'. Oh, they recognise me from that ghastly rubbish website. Doesn't matter, I'm in the mood to warm up my muscles. Perhaps I should start with them while waiting for you. The rude festival seems to have begun with one of the bikers… Headbutt for the traces on his head front… (Lucky, Hanni didn't show up with a concussion this morning)... The second came up to him with a knife… the one he used to kill both of them… No, the second biker killed the first, knife in the heart intended to kill Hanni, and then he took the knife to kill him… he stuck the knife in his eye… The owner took his rifle from behind the counter… Will took a few steps back. His eyes were open again as he looked around. *Where the hell is the rifle?* Will said to himself, frowning. Then he walked up to the bar and leaned over the counter. He noticed the hidden hooks which once held the rifle. Then leaned back and continued to look around. *Hanni didn't bring anything home, I'm sure of it.* Will walked up to the owner's body, staring at the corpse which had multiple slash wounds. He squatted beside the body to look closer, and there was a fine brown thread on one of the fingers. *Please don't tell me it's from Hanni's suit! Shit!* Will glanced around then with his gloved fingers he slowly plucked out the thread and shoved it into the pocket of his jacket. Will stood up again and closed his eyes.

I just incapacitate you first with a blow to the temple… The rifle rolled somewhere under the cabinets in the kitchen… Then I catch the two women who were reaching for the door… They both have their head twisted with a wrong angle and look like disarticulated dolls on the floor… I take my time with the owner… missing tongue, both kidneys, and liver… Will came back to the present and his attention was drawn to the immaculate kitchen. Everything looked neatly arranged. The only disturbance was the blood from the corpses. There was a pan on the stove. Will walked towards the pan, and just as he suspected it looked like a liver was cooked in the pan. *Hanni got hungry!* Will giggled, then schooled his features again. Everything in this scene was gory and gruesome, but to Will it seemed like Hannibal was throwing a tantrum. *Just because I told him to control his urges to kill and he said he didn't have urges but I know Hanni…* Will noticed the lonely plate drying nearby the sink, and went there to be sure that he didn't leave anything else behind. He couldn't help but smile at Hannibal's neat and tidy mannerisms.

“You hungry?” Jack’s voice made Will jump. Will turned to face him. “What? No… why?” Jack pointed to the plate on the rack. Will swallowed, thought up a good excuse. “Oh, someone must have eaten before the killers showed up…” Jack’s eyes widened. “Killers? There’s more than one?” Will shrugged. “Look at them, Jack. I mean, yeah... the Ripper was here… but I think one of the bikers has killed his friend. Maybe they were… having a fight when the Ripper showed up. So he killed the other guy… or they had a threesome fight… then decided to kill the owner as he took his rifle and the others, so that won’t be witnesses. Technically he killed only four.” Jack just kept frowning at Will. “Why do I feel like you’re hiding something, Will?” Will’s palms felt clammy. He was trying hard not to give away that he knew WHO the Ripper was. “Maybe because you tend to be paranoid with the job we do, Jack. Maybe because you want the Ripper to be caught so badly that your frustration cons your judgment…” “Yeah, maybe you’re right…” Jack sighed deeply. “Anything else you see here?” “Missing organs. He took the kidneys, the tongue… and I believe the lab will find the remains of human liver in the pan on the stove…” “This bastard took his time and cooked himself a meal at the crime scene!” Jack erupted, the veins on his forehead pulsing. *Hanni’s NOT a bastard… YOU are, because you treat me like your hunting dog!* Will looked away then shook his head. “Come on, Jack! We know the Ripper is eating organs. I’m not surprised he ate them here…”

Eventually Jack called the forensics team into the place and barked out orders. Will quietly slipped away. He thought he could get to his car and drive away in peace, but a familiar red-haired pest was leaning against his vehicle. “Agent Graham! How’s life with a married man?” Will was tempted to strangle the woman. “Get lost, Freddie.” But Freddie Lounds didn’t move away. “Oh, you know I won’t leave until I have my pictures and information.” Will sighed. “This is not some gossip column for a magazine, alright! People died here. You can’t just walk in and act like an investigator…” Freddie laughed. “Well, you’re not an investigator either, are you? In fact, you’re not even an Agent. You teach at Quantico. What the hell are YOU doing at a crime scene?” *First Kendall, now this bitch? How many others think I’m a freak?* Will was hurt by Freddie’s words, but he refused to think about them. “You’re trying to blackmail me, Ms Lounds? You think I’m just going to roll over and let you walk all over me? Think again! Just one word to Agent Crawford and you’d have a restraining order… or better yet, he’ll charge you with obstruction of justice… hampering an investigation. Maybe then you can write about prison-news!” Will grabbed Freddie’s arm and pulled her away. She let out a short scream as Will’s grip tightened around her arm. In the end, as Freddie tried to regain her balance Will was already in the car driving off.

New Frontier

Chapter Notes

Part 1 of the adventure, Desire, The Never-Ending Story, is coming to an end, but another begins. As our Special Christmas for you, Fannibals, we publish at the same time the 1st chapter of Part 2, Sabrer Le Champagne!

Enjoy life and carry on Hannibal!

DuchessofYork & Elefant

After his Lecture at Quantico, Will was really tired. He walked through his private tunnel to his car. Not seeing the curious glances his students gave him on the way, not seeing his colleagues who tried to avoid him discreetly. He didn't care for them, he only cared for Hannibal. And Hannibal had made a mistake. That was unknown and frightening. First Kendall at the hospital, and now this. Will was worried of the impact he had on Hannibal. He was connected to both killings, the reason why Hannibal made the mistake. They had to have a serious conversation again when he got home, and Will was trying to find a way to reach out to Hannibal with clarity. He knew Hannibal will be upset again to learn that he had left evidence at the diner crime scene. Will would have to find a way to break the news without triggering another murder frenzy. All he felt right now for Hannibal was infinite love. And from there he was confident he would find the right words to speak to Hannibal.

While driving home, Will was rehashing those thoughts. He needed Hannibal to let him enter his mind palace. He wanted to share his lover's pain as well as the love. The pain he protected there almost killed him, but it was the key to fully understanding Hannibal. Will wasn't sure he could survive it, or maintain his sanity if he experienced Hannibal's trauma. But there was no other way, he knew. He didn't let any of his thoughts on the matter reflect in his behavior when he entered the kitchen. Hannibal was cooking tongue in tomato sauce with capers just as he had texted Will earlier. Will stood near the island and watched for a while. Sensing his lover's uneasy feelings, Hannibal turned around. "What's the matter, Beloved?" Will tugged his curls and sighed. "You got careless, Hanni." Hannibal's reply was halted when Will took out a small plastic bag from his pocket. Inside the bag was a fine piece of thread. "You left this at the crime scene. You know, if I didn't see it first, Zeller or Price would be doing a fibre analysis right now. Then they'll trace this to a specific type of cloth from a special tailor. It won't be too long before they find out it's from one of your suits!" Will was breathing hard as he finished speech. He was angry, but more importantly he was scared that Hannibal had been so close to be discovered.

Hannibal didn't show anything and didn't say anything while he reached for the bag. Will let him take the bag and gripped his wrist to draw him closer. They reached to each other in silence. He put his head on Hannibal's chest and stayed there in silence. Hannibal didn't move. He felt Will pushing the door of his mind palace, but kept it closed. He sighed and put his arms around Will. "Please… let me in, Hanni. I want to help you, help you deal with the pain. I love you so much…" Hannibal held Will tighter, and felt the walls around his mind palace quake and crumble. * *Oh, my beautiful David... what have you done to me!* * Hannibal realised that the love he had for Will was reactivating the pain of the trauma, distracting him and the reason why his behavior was so erratic lately. The love he had for Mischa, he had transferred it in part to Will; and if he lost Will like he lost Mischa, that could kill him again. But this time, he was stronger and had someone else to protect. "I don't know if I can do what you asked from me, Will. I never shared my heart with anyone like I do with you, and no one ever came closer than you are now." Will just held on to Hannibal, waiting for him to continue. "When I… when I lost Mischa, I built a solid wall around my heart and my mind palace. Now here you are, in our kitchen, trying to break through. And as much as I try to hold back, the walls seem to be listening to you…"

Will lift his head up and the infinite love that Hannibal could feel there, opened the door. He spoke for hours in Will's arms. They both cried sharing the pain as only empaths can. They kissed as shipwrecked clung to a lifeline. Eventually, they shared the after-silence that now spoke to both of them with clarity. Hannibal felt calm again, and Will felt safe again. All that needed to be said had been said, and they could share the same space in their mind palace. Hannibal promised, with renewed confidence for both their sakes, that he would be very careful the next time he hunted. Will told Hannibal that he was thinking about taking a break from teaching and crime scenes for a while. They got up from the kitchen floor, and ate the tongue that Hannibal had prepared with some rice. It was a little overcooked, but Hannibal didn't say anything about it. Exhausted by the emotions, they went to bed and fell asleep in each other arms.

As usual, Hannibal was up earlier than Will, and the scent of coffee on his night table woke him up with a smile on his face. The door of their room was opened and he could hear Hannibal busy in the kitchen. His smile brightened, life was good. He went down the stairs with the coffee cup in his hand and leaned against the kitchen door frame, watching Hannibal with love. "You spoil me." Will said, sleep still evident in his voice. Hannibal just smiled. He lifted the cup from Will's hands and held it to Will's lips. "See? Spoiling… what did I ever do to..." "Drink your coffee, Darling." Hannibal insisted. He went back to the stove and took the pan to serve the scrambled eggs in the two plates already waiting on the kitchen island. There, crusty bacon, asparagus with some Hollandaise sauce and tomato cut as a rose, were already nicely arranged. This plate in itself, Will thought, was a symbol of Hannibal, as he was firmly standing as a survivor not to survive but to strive. This was something very desirable in Will's life. Will had accommodated to his environment by shrinking himself, being only the shadow of what he was to be accepted all along, the taming process of education and then in his work environment. Now he could play with his lost shell to manipulate others, but he no longer fit in this suit being too small for him. He needed time for

himself and for his relationship with Hannibal to open and bloom like a rose in the morning sun. This morning was as every morning they had before, but everything was different at the same time because their complicity was now on all levels. The dance was perfect with them both.

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When Will arrived at Quantico, the first colleagues he met on the parking coming out of the main building looked at the floor to be sure not to cross his gaze. So Will knew something was up before Beverly caught him exiting the lift. “Will! You better prepare yourself and read the last love ode about you that Freddie Lounds wrote in her rag…” Will sighed “Not again!..” “Yep! She seems pretty in love with you… She’s now implying in a rather unsubtle way that the Chesapeake Ripper gravitates around you, if it’s not you. This time you really pissed her off…” Will groaned as he and Beverly walked towards Jack’s office. He didn’t need to know what Jack thought about the article; seeing the dark look on his face was enough for Will to wish he’d stayed in bed with Hannibal. Jack looked up from his computer and motioned Will to sit. Will refused, standing by the desk with his hands in his pockets. “Katz, tell Price and Zeller I want those autopsy reports by the end of the day.” Beverly nodded, looked at Will and mouthed ‘lunch later’ and left the office. Jack leaned back in his chair and narrowed his eyes. “Just what the hell did you tell Lounds?” “Nothing, Jack.” “Oh yeah? Then what the hell is she babbling about on Tattle Crime?” Will shrugged. “I don’t know. I didn’t read…” Jack let out a sarcastic chuckle. “You didn’t read it? So you’re just going to claim ignorance to all this?” Will waved his hands out. “I don’t make a habit of reading Freddie’s bullshit every morning, Jack! I prefer to laze in bed, let the dogs out into the garden… have a cup of coffee…” Will grinned as he continued. “...maybe if I’m lucky and Hannibal hasn’t left for work yet, we have shower-sex…”

Jack cursed and slammed his palm onto the table. “This is not a joke!” “What do you want me to tell you, Jack. I am not responsible for what she wrote in her rag, I just try my best to be happy in my life… And if what I do for the BAU isn’t satisfying for you… Or for me, I better quit and do something that doesn’t interfere with my happiness so much…” Jack was taken aback “Will, don’t take it so dramatically. It is not what I ask you, you are still saving lives here…” Will sighed. “Yeah, yeah, I know… but life is short Jack, and I also want something for me now. I am too old to play freak on demand, or the first of class for that matter… I don’t care about honor or disapproval, and you know it. So let the leash on my neck and let me do what I am good at…” “Ok, Will… You know you have my support, but don’t forget that I have a leash too and I have to report too… Frankly, I would give a medal to the Ripper if he could get rid of Lounds for us. It would make my life easier as well…” Jack realized too late what he just said. “Ok, forget what I just said. Still, you better read her article before you go off to class…” Will sighed with a grin on his face, “I will, Jack.” Jack indicated him he was dismissed and he left his office without another word.

Hannibal had finished his surgery by 2:45 pm. It was too late for lunch, but he was feeling a little hungry. After washing up, he sat in his office and unwrapped the sandwich he packed. He thought about calling Will, then saw Will's message about having lunch with Beverly. While he ate, Hannibal clicked on his tablet. He browsed through the various websites offering European tours. Will did say that it was time they both took a break and went away for a while. Europe was not foreign to Hannibal, but he still wanted to have a list of places he could show Will. As he finished his sandwich and coffee, he decided to look Tattle crime up. Freddie Lounds' latest article made Hannibal freeze.

...but is he really an FBI agent? Of course not! Will Graham is in fact just a teacher. But the FBI seems to think his freak-brain is a secret-weapon to help them solve cases. Who is Graham really? Well, if you've been keeping up with Tattle Crime lately, you would remember our expose at the restaurant <link to photos>. Oh yes! It seems our FBI-freak has a thing for married Baltimore socialites. Hah! So is THIS what our revered law enforcement has become? Employing homewreckers to solve dangerous crimes? Bad enough that Graham thinks and feels like those psychopaths; now it seems he's sleeping his way up through the Baltimore Elite circle too!..

Hannibal clicked off his tablet, unable to finish reading the trash Lounds posted. * *Rude pig! How dares she degrade my Beloved! How dares the pig equate him to a common street prostitute!** His rage threatened to explode. Hannibal got up from his chair and walked up to his CD player. He randomly jammed on the button and his office was immediately filled with Mozart's Requiem. He stood by the window, his eyes closed, the music invading his auditory senses. He tried to clear his mind, thinking of Will in his bed. Will's laughter, Will's moans of pleasure. He centered in his mind palace where the feeling of Will now infused the atmosphere and he found serenity there. He thought of his colleague's patient in room 304, a young brat who arrived with a knife wound perforating the abdomen in two places. How rudely he spoke with the nurses, addressing them like his own servants, even showing no gratitude to his surgeon who fought five hours in the OT to save his vile life. The fact that the brat had red hair didn't help… Hannibal saw himself and what he was thinking. He remembered his promise to Will not to kill at the hospital anymore, and he worked on himself to keep his frustration in check. That was painful again but he didn't want to indulge himself in another frenzy killing so soon.

The hospital wasn't the best environment to keep his frustration in check, so many temptations… In hospital, people tend to regress, to show more of themselves and the social varnish cracked revealing their true nature. A good place to detect the rude indeed… But now after his promise to Will, it didn't work in his favor anymore. Hannibal needed some time away to think about it and decide of his next move. He wanted time for himself and for his relation with Will to flourish with all the promises and thorns.

The week went on with two other gang related killings for Will and heavy surgery schedules for Hannibal. They both were happy to leave for the house on the cliff with the dogs on Friday evening. One hour drive and they would be in their private island cut from the rest of the world. After dinner, Hannibal made love to Will by the fireplace, reminiscent to that time once before. As always, every sound which came from Will was like a symphony to Hannibal's ears. They lay on the plush carpet, basking in the warmth of the fire. "Guess what the students at Quantico call me?" Will said once he finally caught his breath. Hannibal just hummed. "They used to call me Spooky-Graham because of how I make those deductions from crime scenes… Now thanks to Freddie's article, the trainees started a rumour of how I've been warming the bed of all the senior agents…"

Hannibal pushed Will onto his back and kissed him hard. Will laughed. "Jealous? You do know you're not the first guy I've ever…" another kiss swallowed his words. "Hanni!" Will laughed. "Much as I admire your sexual prowess, you will never belong to another now that I have you." Hannibal said this while kissing and sucking his way across Will's chest. Will moaned helplessly, enjoying Hannibal's possessiveness. "I hated every word that pig wrote," Hannibal said, after another round of sex. "She degraded you. As if you were a...a thing… to be passed around." Will caressed Hannibal's cheek. "I've been called worse." "Doesn't mean you have to look the other way, Will. You deserve respect, especially for your wonderful gift." Will could see how much Hannibal was pained that he would not stand more firmly to defend himself. "Will, you know that at one point I will kill her." Will smiled in Hannibal's eyes. "And Jack will give you a medal for that…" "I don't care about Jack but I want you to kill her with me. It will be highly therapeutic for you." "Is it doctor's orders?.." "Will." "Alright, I will do it with you. I think I will enjoy it greatly anyway." They kissed to seal the deal and the fate of Freddie.

The next day when Will came back from his long walk with the dogs like he enjoyed to do every week-end, Hannibal was concentrating on his laptop. Will leaned with his hands on the back of his desk chair above his shoulder. "Planning an escape to Europe?.." Hannibal turned around and gripped Will's hand to draw him on his lap. Will let him and put his arms around Hannibal's neck smiling indulgently. "You said you wanted some time away from crime scenes and I feel like I need time from the operating table as well…" Will looked into Hannibal's eyes searching for what he didn't verbalize. "Is it so difficult for you? What happened to 'I don't have an urge to kill'?" Hannibal didn't flinch and kept his gaze locked with Will's. "I don't have an urge to kill, Will. I find it an easy way to wind my frustration certainly, but mostly it is a way to make the world a better place, a more beautiful place getting rid of the rude and ugly pigs like Freddie Lounds." Will smiled. A vacation would be good for both of them, and for things to cool down a little. It had been barely a week since he came back to work after his recuperation, and already Jack was making Will work hard. It was as if he was making Will pay for all the loss of time.

“A trip to Europe sounds nice. Where are we going?” Will leaned in to kiss Hannibal’s nose. Hannibal wrapped his arms tighter around Will. “I want to show you Florence, Will. The streets, the architecture, the art, the food, the nightlife… Things I experienced in my youth. I want to share all those things with you.” Will beamed. “Yes! Let’s go then! When do we leave? How long shall we stay there?..” Hannibal chuckled. “Darling, be patient. I will let you know once I’ve made all the arrangements. Then you and I can sign the forms for our leave…” Will was only too pleased. It had been awhile since he last had a vacation; in fact the last time was after he left the police force. “I don’t care WHERE you take me… As long as we can spend time together, that’s all that matters,” Will said, resting his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. “Then it should be a surprise…” Hannibal smiled. They kissed and Will went to take care of the dogs while Hannibal kept dreaming on his laptop. Later, when Will was passing in through the living room he heard him speak in french on the phone with a fondness in his voice that he never heard before. He didn’t ask if Hannibal wanted to surprise him, it was all good for him.

Things went fast from there. Monday evening Hannibal announced the dates of their “European escapade” as he called it to Will. He needed one week more for his surgery schedules to be transferred to his colleagues or postponed if possible. Both the hospital and his patients were not so happy by the “surprise escapade with his partner” and told him so. When, in an unexpected answer from his part, he told them that nobody was irreplaceable, they all looked at him with denial and incomprehension, as if he just stated that earth was square. Hannibal’s ego was amused, but he didn’t care for any of them. In his mind, he was already walking on the side of the Seine with Will’s hand in his. Tuesday morning when Will was driving to Quantico thinking about of the subject of his lecture, Jack called him to let him know that Alana Bloom will teach his course today, and gave him the address of the crime scene to join him quickly. Will hung up with a sigh of frustration replaced by a smile thinking of Jack’s face when he will announce him his vacation dates. * *Oh god, it will be good to be away of all this circus with Hannibal* .* At the same time, Will was a little worried about the progression on the Chesapeake Ripper investigation in his absence.

He will pick Beverly’s brain discreetly before leaving, just in case. However he was reasonably sure that they didn’t find anything new. The doubt was still about Hannibal’s mistake at the dinner; but since their evening on the kitchen floor, Hannibal was back to his old self. Will waited to be back at Quantico to give Jack the dates of his vacation in his office. Nothing was going to stop him from leaving this time. To hell with the cases, with Jack’s temper and his impatience, with the whole FBI.

A week later, Will was in the lab telling Beverly about all the Dos & Don'ts while she kept his dogs company. “So… please don’t tell me you got secretly hitched with your Sugar Daddy Doctor… And are planning to go off on a honeymoon!” Will blushed and stammered. “He’s not… he’s not my… we didn’t get married!” Beverly laughed. “Just pulling your leg, Will. But come on… you gotta admit he is kinda like your Sugar Daddy.” Will pouted. “I’m

not living off his money, you know." Beverly smirked. "But he still spoiled you with a romantic escapade in Florence." Price was about to add something else as Jack all but marched in. "You're planning to run off in the middle of the investigation without telling me?" Jack was fuming, his hands on his hips, eyes burning through Will's head. "You have Alana Bloom, Jack… And last time I checked, I was still officially not an agent of the FBI. I deposed my dates to HR like a nice little employee that I am…" "Will..." Will ignored Jack's interruption. "...so I don't see what the problem is. I have a lot of leave anyway, so it's only right that I make good use of it. Nobody is irreplaceable." They all looked at him with denial and incomprehension like if he just stated that earth was square. "Do you intend to quit, Will?" Jack yapped.

Will chuckled. "I must say that the idea is often on my mind, Jack… but no. Not while I can still make a difference between good and evil. And that is why I need to recharge my battery with something good. Besides, you need a reliable bloodhound when you hunt, right?" The last part Will blurted out with sarcasm, causing Beverly to almost choke on her coffee. Price giggled while Zeller looked away quickly, trying not to laugh. Jack was livid. "You! You think… that I…" Will waved his hand. "Come on Jack! Everyone knows why I'm dragged around crime scenes. You just want to 'borrow my imagination'. So once you're done with me, you'll probably find another!" Will let all his frustration out. He was sick of being used and being made a fool of. His only real friend was Beverly, maybe Price and Zeller. Alana was keeping her distance now, after the whole almost-relationship mess. "Look, it's too bad that you had to find out about my leave application from HR. I don't answer to you anyway, so I don't owe you any explanation!" Will walked out of the lab, ignoring Jack's call. "It's probably best if he takes a long vacation… I've never seen him so bitter before…" Jack said loud to nobody in particular. Then he turned to the science team, "What do you have for me?"

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The next week-end they didn't go to the house on the cliff, and Will was a little sad for the dogs. Hannibal insisted to pack for Will, and he wasn't sure he would like the result. Being with Hannibal without looking as a bum, particularly during their European escapade was something he was looking for, but he would not know where to begin. Will lounged on the sofa by the fireplace, looking lost. That's how Hannibal found him when he walked in to tell Will about dinner. "Will? Are you alright?" Will blinked and turned to his lover. "I don't know… I mean… this is the first time I'll be away from my dogs. And, and… I'll be in a foreign country too…" He rubbed his tired eyes and tugged his curls. "Would you think I sound childish if I said I don't want to go away for too long?" Hannibal smiled. He sat beside Will and put his arm around Will's shoulder. "Nothing wrong with feeling a little anxious about our trip. You've never really travelled that far, so this new experience is exciting and frightening for you. What you're feeling is normal, my Dear." Hannibal pulled Will closer, kissing the top of his head. He breathed in Will's shampoo, the same shampoo which

Hannibal bought him, which was meant to soften his curls and add more bounce. Will leaned into Hannibal's embrace. "I will really miss my dogs…" he mumbled.

Sunday morning, when Will took a look at HIS suitcase before throwing in his toothbrush, he didn't recognize much. Surprisingly he didn't care. Hannibal had put a dark blue suit with a white shirt on the bed for him to dress when he came out of the bathroom. Even the socks and underwears were new. He smiled - "Sugar Daddy indeed!" He thought of getting something for Beverly and the boys. Not a postcard, perhaps something better. Maybe a postcard would do for Jack. He got dressed and looked at himself in the mirror. "Yeah!.. Looking good Graham…" A familiar pair of arms wrapped around his waist. "Yes… you DO look good..." Hannibal's deep voice whispered into Will's ear. "Not sure though, if I would be comfortable… Not used to wearing clothes that tight…" Hannibal chuckled. "If I remember correctly, Ms Katz did say that you should wear a pair of pants to compliment your pert ass..." Will laughed hard. "Oh my god! You and Beverly should never have met!" "Too late…" Hannibal kissed him slowly, "...but admit it, you love your new look in this suit." Will smirked. "If it means to increase your libido… by all means…" Hannibal sighed, sadly. "As much as I would love to ravish you here and now, we have a flight to catch, Will."

They put the dogs in the Bentley, and the two suitcases. First Wolftrap with a stop at the grocery on the way to buy enough dog food, and then the airport. * *Okay, but maybe not…* * Will thought, even if the Bentley was large, the bags of dry food that could fit in the trunk were not enough for three weeks. Beverly would have to buy more and Will would have to leave some money on the kitchen table. The dogs were happy to be there and Will let them run a moment outside. Hannibal told him it was time to go, and Will was twisted between the void of leaving his dogs, and the hope of this adventure with Hannibal… for exactly 3 seconds. He saw himself moving inside and thought of this Canadian proverb * *who takes a husband, takes a country* .* Hannibal was his own world wherever they'll go. Hannibal's impressive posture was in its place in the first class cabin, and Will found it strangely easy to adapt to this comfortable environment. When the hostess came by proposing orange juice or champagne, he followed the suit and answered in French, "Champagne, merci." Hearing him speak French put some sparkles in Hannibal's gaze on him. He will definitely refresh his French to obtain this effect on his lover.

*****End of part 1*****

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